

МАРК  
**СОЛОННИН**



**Июнь 41-го**  
**ОКОНЧАТЕЛЬНЫЙ ДИАГНОЗ**

## Abstract

The true scale of the military catastrophe of 1941 is still hidden - trying to find at least some justification for the crushing defeat of the Red Army, historical officialdom glosses over the fact that the ratio of Soviet and German losses in the Border Battle reached an incredible figure of 1:35 (35 of our fighters for one retired Hitlerite)! "This is a "miracle" that does not fit into any canons of military science. Such a ratio

of losses is possible only in the case when the white colonialists, who sailed to Africa with cannons and guns, attack the natives armed with spears and hoes. But in the summer of 1941, the situation on the western borders of the USSR was completely different: the defending side as a whole was not inferior to the enemy either in numbers or in weapons, quantitatively surpassed it in the means of delivering a powerful counterattack - tanks and aircraft, and even had the opportunity to build its own defense on a system of natural barriers and long-term defensive structures ... "

A study by a leading military historian, unique in scope and depth, provides an exhaustive answer to the question: what kind of war was Stalin preparing for and why did the real war begin with the catastrophic defeat of the Red Army? Using tens of thousands of pages of primary documents stored in Russian and German archives, and providing 37 original maps-schemes illustrating the description of the hostilities of the first days of the war, Mark Solonin makes the final diagnosis of the Stalinist regime, for which in 1941 even his own army did not want to fight. This is exactly the book that everyone who wants to deeply and impartially study the history of the greatest tragedy of our people has been waiting for for decades.

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## **Solonin Mark Semenovich**

### **June 41st. Final Diagnosis**

This book, like all the previous ones, was written outside the framework of an order, funding, direct or indirect support from any state, academic, socio-political structures. At the same time, the search, collection and translation of a huge array of archival documents required considerable effort and expense. I managed to solve this problem only thanks to the versatile help of dozens of people, most of them unknown to me even by name. I warmly and sincerely thank each of them and consider it my pleasant duty to note the special contribution of Petr Chernyshev (Ukraine), Igor Humenny (Ukraine), Mikhail Gorfunkel (Great Britain), Sergey Gorshenev (Russia), Ilya Dombrovsky (Netherlands), Alexei Zharov (Russia), Dmitry Kirikov (Germany), Richard Lehmann (Ukraine), Sergey Petrov (Russia), Vasily Risto (Germany), Alexander Fisher (USA).



# Foreword

## *Catastrophe*

At dawn on June 22, 1941, the troops of Nazi Germany invaded the territory of the USSR. Three weeks later, the German generals could state that the first task assigned to them under the Barbarossa plan (***“The main forces of the Russian ground forces located in Western Russia must be destroyed in bold operations by deep, rapid advancement of tank wedges. Retreat of combat-ready troops the enemy into the wide expanses of Russian territory must be prevented ...”***), basically already

completed.

The advance of the "tank wedges" was deep and fast. The enemy occupied Lithuania, Latvia, almost all of Belarus, Western Ukraine, crossed the Bug, Neman, Western Dvina, Berezina, Goryn and Sluch, went to the Dnieper. July 10, the Germans occupied Pskov, July 16 - Smolensk.

Two-thirds of the distance from the western border to Leningrad and Moscow were covered. Wehrmacht tank divisions crossed 500 or more kilometers of Soviet roads. During the first 20 days of the war, the Germans occupied an area of about 450 thousand square meters. km, which is about 2 times the territory of Poland occupied by the Wehrmacht in September 1939, and 3 times the territory of Belgium, Holland and north-east France, captured by the Wehrmacht in May 1940 (see Fig. 1). The troops of the Baltic and Western Special Military Districts

(more than 70 divisions, 1 million people) were defeated, dispersed through the forests or taken prisoner. A little later, the same thing happened with the Southwestern and Southern fronts. The "retreat of the combat-ready enemy troops" was successfully (for the Germans) prevented - only scattered remnants of the once huge army were able to retreat beyond the Dnieper and the Western Dvina; division commanders who were able to withdraw one and a half thousand people with a dozen machine guns and a couple of cannons (i.e., save about 10-15% of the personnel) were noted in orders as especially distinguished ...

By July 6-9, the troops of the North-Western, Western and South-Western fronts lost 11.7 thousand tanks, 19 thousand guns and mortars. [1] Particularly heavy, almost irreparable losses were suffered by tank troops - the world's largest Soviet tank troops, to create

which was spent many years of work and huge material resources. Already on July 15, 1941, the remnants of the mechanized corps began to be officially disbanded. Aviation divisions and air force regiments of the western districts lost at least 80–85% of their aircraft; however, the combat vehicles remaining on the lists were for the most part considered faulty. As a result, by August 1, 1941, the Soviet Air Force lost 10 thousand aircraft (four times more than the Luftwaffe had on the Eastern Front), of which 5240 were listed as "unaccounted for loss." [4]

The rapid loss of vast territories inevitably led to the loss of gigantic stocks of military equipment, for some reason concentrated at the western borders of the Soviet Union. According to the GAU (Main Artillery Directorate), out of 40 artillery depots located to the Leningrad, Nizhyn, Kremenchug line, only 11 were evacuated. , uniforms ... It is not surprising that by mid-July, the campaign on the Eastern Front seemed to many German generals already completed - they could not imagine that the army, which had suffered such losses, would be capable of further resistance. Yes, the "beaten Hitler generals" were ultimately wrong, and the war ended in Berlin,

but our joy on this occasion is with tears in our eyes. What was easily and quickly lost in 3-4 months of the summer - autumn of 1941 had to be returned at the cost of three years of continuous bloodshed, at the cost of the lives of millions of soldiers at the front, millions of civilians in the occupied territories. In general, the Red Army was able to return to the border line of the 41st year only by July - August 1944. This is in general; in particular, for example, in the Baltic states, the fighting continued until the spring of 1945. And yet, the most incredible thing in this whole story is not the high pace and depth of the offensive of the Wehrmacht, not the huge numbers of losses of the Red Army - but the amazing (incredibly small) losses of the enemy. Advancing, and extremely successfully advancing than the defending Red

The Wehrmacht suffered losses **dozens of** ,  
**times**

**smaller than** the Army. For example, the 6th Panzer Division of the Wehrmacht (Army Group North). This example is remarkable in that the 6th TD was the worst armed - the basis of its tank fleet was light Czech tanks of the 1935 model (Pz-35 (t) according to the German notation), obsolete technically and

very worn out by many years of marches, campaigns and battles. On June 24, near the Dubysa River (Lithuania), the 6th German Panzer faced the 2nd Panzer Division of the Red Army, which, among other things, was armed with 31 of the latest KV heavy tanks. For the Soviet division, the tank battle ended in complete defeat, the loss of equipment and the death of the commander. The 6th German TD lost a total of 121 people on June 24 (31 killed, 18 missing, 72 wounded). **[5]** Less than one percent of the staff. And this is the hardest day and the biggest losses. On June 28, the

6th Panzer Division crosses the full-flowing Daugava, a natural defensive line of strategic importance. Losses: 3 killed, 14 wounded. **[6]** Having crossed to the north coast, the German tank division rushed to Pskov. On July 4–6, she defeated units of the 163rd motorized and 3rd tank divisions of the Red Army in a head-on battle, broke through the line of bunkers in the Ostrovsky fortified area, and crossed a couple of small rivers. Losses in three days: 28 killed, 55 wounded. **[7]**

Here is another German division, the 11th Panzer. The level of personnel losses is one of the highest among all the Wehrmacht tank divisions: by July 3, the division's losses amounted to 923 people, including 333 irrevocably. **[8]** Six percent of the staff. At the cost of these six percent, the 11th TD managed to do the following: continuously advancing in the vanguard of the 1st Tank Group, the division covered more than 200 km; entered into battle with the Soviet 10th and 43rd tank and 228th rifle divisions, the 109th and 213th motorized divisions and the 114th tank regiment of the 57th tank division; these battles ended with the fact that numbers remained from the mentioned divisions of the Red Army and, at best, 30-40% of the personnel with

a dozen tanks, and the German division rolled further east ...

In general, the entire Wehrmacht grouping on the Eastern Front in the period from June 22 to July 6 lost 64,132 people, including 19,789 irretrievably. Such figures are given in his famous "War Diary" (entry dated July 10, 1941) by the Chief of Staff of the German Ground Forces, Colonel-General F. Halder. Of course, on July 10, Halder did not yet have all the

information on losses on July 6, so the above figures (64 thousand, including 20 thousand irretrievably) are somewhat underestimated. According to the so-called "ten days" (loss reports compiled by the high command on the basis of reports from the headquarters of units and formations for each ten-day period), the losses of the Wehrmacht by July 10, 1941 amounted to 77 thousand people, including 23 thousand irretrievably. The number of the Wehrmacht grouping on the Eastern Front at that time Halder

estimates at 3.3 million people, respectively, the total losses (killed, wounded, missing) are only 2.3%. Yes, and these figures can be

challenged, because any reports compiled during the hostilities are not accurate and complete enough. We can continue to refine the statistical data, but this endless discussion should not obscure the main thing from us. And the main thing is that for the defeat of the First Strategic Echelon of the Red Army (in terms of the number of divisions it was not inferior to any European army, and in terms of the number of tanks and aircraft many times greater than any of them), for the occupation of a huge territory, the Wehrmacht paid with a loss of 2–3% of its personnel. If we talk not about general, but only about irretrievable (killed and missing) losses, then they turned out to be about 1%. "The detachment did not notice the loss of a fighter ..." Even during what Soviet historiography called the "triumphant march of the Wehrmacht in France", the irretrievable losses of the Germans were twice as much (46 thousand people). [16]

The most important assessment of the losses of the Wehrmacht can be a comparison with the losses of the enemy, i.e., the Red Army. According to the official opinion of modern Russian military historians, in the period from June 22 to July 6-9, the troops of the North-Western, Western and South-Western fronts irrevocably lost 589 thousand people, and this figure does not include the losses of the Northern Front (Leningrad Military District) and Southern Front (Odessa Military District), which began active hostilities on June 29 and July

2, 1941, respectively. So, in particular, they estimated the total losses of the North-Western Front at 88.5 thousand people (only 23% of the original number). Can this be true, if all known documents testify with absolute unanimity that the front was utterly defeated, only scattered groups of fighters and commanders reached Ostrov and Pskov [1]. And what is noteworthy, on page 368 of the same collection, we are told that from June 22 to July 9, the NWF lost 341,000 small arms. How could 89 thousand people "lose" 341 thousand rifles? In a normal warring army, the loss of personal small arms is less than the loss of people - it is not allowed to throw rifles, they have numbers, and someone signed for each rifle; a rifle weighs 3–4 kg, and one healthy man can carry 3–4

rifles from the battlefield, left over from wounded and killed comrades, without much effort. In an abnormal, panic-stricken army, the loss of personal weapons

can equal the losses of personnel, but not exceed them by 4 times! The Western Front, by the way, also managed (on the pages of the statistical collection "could") lose 521 thousand units of small arms with the loss of 418 thousand people. Only in the case of the Southwestern Front, the figures given in Krivosheev's collection come into some agreement with common sense (242 thousand people and 170 thousand small arms were lost). As a result, we have the following: even if we accept

Krivosheev's obviously and significantly underestimated figures, then in this case the ratio of irretrievable losses of personnel during the so-called. "border battle" (until July 6-10) will be **1 to 23**. The real picture of irretrievable losses is determined, most likely, by figures of the order of 900-1000 thousand on the Soviet side and 25-30 thousand on the other, which ultimately gives a ratio of **1 to 35**. Somewhat violating the chronology of the presentation, I immediately note that the final ratio irretrievable losses for the whole of 1941 amounted to about **1 to 28**.

This is a "miracle" that does not fit into any canons of military science. Such a ratio of losses is possible only in the case when the white colonialists, who sailed to Africa with cannons and guns, attack the natives armed with spears and hoes. But in the summer of 1941, the situation on the western borders of the USSR was completely different: the defending side as a whole was not inferior to the enemy either in numbers or in weapons, quantitatively surpassed it in the means of delivering a powerful counterattack - tanks and aircraft, and even had the opportunity to build its own defense on a system of natural barriers (full-flowing rivers Bug, Neman, Berezina, Zapadnaya Dvina, Dnieper, Dniester) and long-term defensive structures (about 1 thousand reinforced concrete pillboxes along the "new" border and more than 3 thousand - at the "old").

#### *Looking for explanations*

What was it? What happened to the "invincible and legendary" Red Army? How could such a terrible defeat happen to the army of a country endowed with innumerable natural resources, a country that, frankly, did nothing else but prepare for a future war? The right answer starts with the right question. The same aphorism can, in my opinion, be rephrased differently: the wrong answer (the

moreover, a deliberate attempt to mislead people) begins with an absurdly worded question. This is exactly what Soviet propagandist historians did - the corresponding paragraph in their books was called "Reasons for the temporary failures of the Red Army" or even cooler: "Reasons for losing the border battle."

The words "temporary failure" are not at all what prompts us to look for some kind of weighty reason. Who does not experience temporary setbacks? And the term "border battle" - in relation to the military campaign that unfolded in spaces larger than the area of most European countries - should be recognized as a brilliant find of party propagandists. The reader's imagination immediately draws a picture of a battle between a platoon of border guards and a gang that has piled on them. It remains only to add two words - "unexpectedly and suddenly" - and the reason for "losing the border battle" will become simple and understandable ... However, the

thesis of "an unexpected and sudden attack on a peacefully sleeping country" even in Soviet times did not claim the status of "the first line of defense", but rather performed the role of a "foreground" (this term in military affairs denotes a strip of territory on which it is supposed to slow down the enemy's offensive, delay his exit to the main line of defense).

Even Soviet propagandists (the word "even" in this case does not refer to an assessment of their mental abilities, but to an assessment of the situation in which they worked, feeling behind their backs the reliable support of the "organs" ready to shut up any dissent) understood that it was unnecessary to emphasize the topic the notorious "suddenness" is not worth it - she was too stupid to expose her own party, her wise Central Committee and the Leader himself, who could not discern the concentration of a three million enemy army near the borders of the USSR. With the very first rays of "glasnost" the flowers of suddenness withered completely; Today, even a conscientious schoolboy knows that a long series of the most severe defeats of the Red Army (Umansky, Kiev, Vyazemsky, Bryansk, Kerch, Kharkov "cauldrons"), which began in the summer of 1941, continued in the autumn and resumed in May 1942; What kind of "suddenness" are we talking about here?

Accordingly, the first and main "line of defense" in Soviet historical mythology was "multiple numerical superiority of the enemy, especially in tanks and aircraft." This sounds convincing. Weighty. Since childhood, a processed Soviet person immediately imagined three Red Army soldiers with "one rifle for three", on which five Germans were advancing, hidden under the armor of the "Tiger". And after them



- a column of submachine gunners, all as one on armored personnel carriers. Here and

fight here! All this nonsense melted away like fog at dawn, at the first sign of the elimination of ideological censorship. At this moment, tanks, cannons, machine guns and divisions have long been counted and recounted, the results have been repeatedly rechecked and published. Only those who have closed their eyes very tightly and have not opened their eyes for the last 10-15 years can not know the real balance of forces today. Of the many worthy publications, I can recommend, for example, a detailed article by M. Meltyukhov. **[19]** The most inquisitive can turn directly to the primary documents, since in our time you can get acquainted with them without even leaving your computer. **[20]**

From myself, I just want to remind you that on June 22 the war did not end, but only began. Accordingly, the "instant photo" of the composition of the opposing groups as of the first day of the war can by no means be considered an exhaustive answer to the question of the balance of forces of the parties. No less important (both theoretically and practically) is the ability to build up forces, make up for the loss of personnel and equipment, and form new formations. This is what we traditionally forget about. And this habit arose in Soviet times not by chance - "instant photography" seriously distorts (in favor of Germany) the real picture of the balance of power. What the command of the Wehrmacht gathered on June 22, 1941 at the borders of the Soviet Union was the maximum achievable for Germany, which had long mobilized reservists and was now fighting on several land fronts, in the sky above the "Reich" and in the vast expanses of the Atlantic ocean. In total, by the end of 1941, on the Eastern Front, 2 tank, 1 motorized and 25 infantry divisions were put into battle from the reserve of the Civil Code; very modestly - both in absolute and relative numbers (in the three Army Groups "North", "Center", South, there were initially 119 divisions, not counting the so-called "security"). As a marching replenishment, the Wehrmacht units on the Eastern Front received less than 20% of their original strength by the end of 1941. On the other hand, the forces that the Red Army deployed in the western districts by June 22 represented the minimum that the 200-million-strong Soviet Union could concentrate

in the West under conditions of incomplete covert mobilization. On June 23, 1941, open mobilization began, and by July 1, 5.3 million people were drafted into the Armed Forces [2]. This meant an increase in the total

The Red Army doubled and allowed the formation of new divisions and brigades in the hundreds. On July 1, mobilization, of course, did not end. She was just getting started. In total, by the end of the year - according to the minimum available estimates - 11.7 million people were mobilized, conscientious modern researchers counted all 14 million. Of course, not all of these millions immediately fell into the army, but in general the general "resource of manpower", provided to the command of the Red Army in 1941, approximately three times exceeded the corresponding resource of the enemy.

Already by July 10, despite the heavy losses and encirclement of the first weeks of the war, the active fronts of the Red Army included 202 (!) Divisions, including 62 "fresh" formations of the Second Strategic Echelon that did not take part in the June battles [3]. **[140]** And the 62 divisions mentioned are only the beginning of a long list; already by this date, as part of the reserve of the Civil Code, directly behind the front, there were 22 rifle, 6 tank and 3 motorized divisions. By August 1, the strength of the active army increased to 263 divisions. And the flywheel of mobilization keeps spinning and spinning, and more and more new formations appear at the front ... The dynamics of the

replenishment of tank troops is even more eloquent. In the second half of 1941, only 513 tanks and "assault guns" were sent to make up for the losses of the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front, in addition, two fresh tank divisions (2nd and 5th), armed with 380 tanks. Total - 893 tanks, including 631 medium. During the same period, the Red Army received 5,600 tanks from industry, including 2,200 medium T-34s and 1,000 heavy KVs. And this is not counting the tanks that entered the active army as part of tank units and formations transferred to the front from the internal military districts. Let's pay tribute to the Soviet propagandists - they understood that they would not be able

to hold the first line of defense for a long time (that is, frankly and brazenly lie about the "multiple numerical superiority of the Wehrmacht"), and therefore the second line began to be prepared in advance: "Yes, there were a lot of weapons, but all of it was hopelessly outdated, not going to any comparison with the military equipment of the enemy. A remarkable example is that in the article mentioned above, M. Meltyukhov reports that the following remark was made on the margins of the manuscript of the 4th volume of the classic Soviet "History of World War II": "Indicators for the Armed Forces of the USSR, especially for tanks - 18,600, aircraft - **15 990, too large** (as said! - **M.S. ). Without a qualitative description, the reader may have a false idea of the strength of the parties on the eve of the war. It is known**

***that in the Soviet Army the vast majority of tanks were obsolete systems...***

This trick was invented many decades ago, but it enjoys particular success just today. The younger generation of "new Russians", who are already accustomed to the fact that in the store you can't find not only a radio receiver of domestic production, but also an iron, a vacuum cleaner and a kettle made in Russia, without any doubts is ready to believe that the Soviet Union was the same backward village. ***"In any case, it is not required to prove (highlighted by me. - M.S. ), the industry was obviously weaker than the German one both in terms of technological equipment and in terms of the level of qualification of the labor force."*** *that the Soviet* So, confidently and firmly, writes one publicist, very well-known in narrow "patriotic circles", who announces himself without a shadow of embarrassment: "I did ***not graduate from two institutes - the Sverdlovsk State Medical Institute and the Ural State Pedagogical Institute. Activist of the movement of science fiction clubs.*** Another one - but not a simple "amateur", but a science fiction writer (***"A.A. Ulanov, science fiction writer. Born January 22, 1976 in Kiev. Writes in the genres of combat and humorous fiction, fantasy and alternative history"***) for a couple with the famous blogger D. Shein , ***he*** wrote a whole

book in which he literally "smeared" the pre-war Soviet defense industry on the wall: ***the Germans did it - there were no such people in Soviet industry, they were distributed among the factories one by one ... "*** [21] Rate the hypnotizing recitative: "I could not, I could not..." even "by the piece" you can not find a single one who is really familiar with the factory floor. There is no one to explain to young people that the combination of the words "highly qualified puncher" is a bad joke. High qualifications are required from a scientist who studies the nature of the mechanical deformation of metals. High qualifications were required from a large team of engineers who developed a powerful hydraulic press. But from an illiterate collective farmer, who will be assigned to this press in wartime, the ability to perform three operations is required: insert the workpiece, press the button, and remove the finished part. There were tens of millions of such stampers (and candidates for stampers) in the Soviet Union.

A turner is not a match for a stamper, but turning work can be different. The simplest possible: to fix a small round (axisymmetric) part in the lathe spindle and machine a circular groove on it. A student of FZU will cope with such a task in the first month of training. The account of turners of similar qualification in the USSR did not go to "pieces", but to millions (a training workshop with a lathe was in every school), and nothing more was required to install a stamped cap (aerodynamic fairing) on an armor-piercing projectile; since a welder is also mentioned, it can be assumed (the drawing of Ulanov and Shein was not given) that the cap was fastened by welding, and not by a tight fit, i.e., the tolerances for the dimensions of the mounting groove were very wide. The work is just for the fazeushnik boy ...

Fortunately, over the past 10-20 years, serious studies have been written on the history of the creation, production and combat use of almost all types of Soviet military equipment. A lot of work has been done, mountains of primary documents have been studied, some established myths have been dispelled (like the "flying tank" Il-2 and the all-destroying "Katyusha", which the Germans allegedly "could not even copy"). As a result, it was established that, in general, the armament of the Red Army was at a level above average, not inferior in terms of its tactical and technical characteristics - again, in general and basically - to any army in the world. In the pre-

war USSR, they actively worked on the "miracles of technology" - not only on the drawings, but also in the metal, there were gyro-stabilized tank sights, automatic aircraft withdrawal from a dive, infrared night vision systems, radars, rocket boosters, etc. Yes, a lot (if not most) of the above was bought or stolen in the West, but in this case we are not interested in the process, not the method, but the result.

Yes, there were problems with the ergonomics of military equipment, with its structural reliability and ease of maintenance - the lack of experienced engineering personnel and the fussy haste in putting equipment into service affected. These shortcomings complicated the combat use and repair of weapons, but did not at all make both impossible. This truth was convincingly confirmed in practice: the Finnish army fought in 1944 (and how it still fought!), using captured Soviet aircraft, tanks and artillery tractors captured in 1940-1941. And yet, one cannot but admit that **"in the Soviet Army, the vast majority**

**of tanks were outdated systems."** This statement is absolutely true, but with two important

clarifications. Firstly, if we take the Soviet T-34 and KV as a starting point, then not the majority, but every single Wehrmacht tank as of June 22, 1941, were "obsolete systems." Secondly, the latest systems are always in the minority in any army in the world, and by the time they replace their predecessors and become the most widespread, they will inevitably become obsolete. This is the arms race. In the summer of 1941, the KV armored monster made a stunning impression on both Soviet and German tankers; by the spring of 1945, next to the heavy tanks of the IS series and the self-propelled gun ISU-152, the same KV looked very pale ... A new era, an era of unbridled freedom of thought and speech, gave rise to a whole bunch of new,

sometimes very extravagant, versions of explaining the causes of a military catastrophe 41 th year. The threshold for entering the discussion has been radically lowered; it used to be that in order to publish an article in a newspaper, it was necessary to knock on the thresholds of editorial offices, present orders, titles, an academic degree ... Now everything is simple, and anyone who has been struck by an "idea" can acquaint the whole planet with it through the World Wide Web. Many people actively use it. I had to

read (and more than once!) About the fact that in the headquarters of the Wehrmacht, it turns out, there was a terrible secret rule, according to which a secret "reducing factor" was used in loss reports. Some comrades believe that in the German reports the figures of losses are underestimated by exactly two times, others, without a shadow of embarrassment, speak of a tenfold ("it was more convenient for them to consider it") underestimation of losses. And even in the Wehrmacht, it turns out that only the one who had already gone for remelting was considered an irretrievably lost tank, and all the rest, frozen in charred boxes in the fields, were not included in the list of losses ... For all their farcicalness, even these "versions" deserve mention - they still once again confirm that the incredible defeat of the Red Army that took place in the summer of 1941 does not fit into any framework of formal logic and urgently requires some kind of explanation.

Several such "explanations" were offered by the young Ph.D. A.V. Isaev. If my memory serves me right, the first in a row was the "dogma about densities". There are such concepts in the theory of military affairs: "density of battle formations", "tactical density". This parameter is calculated by dividing something by the geometric dimensions of the front section, for example: 15 tanks per km of the front, 130 gun barrels per km, 250 shells per hectare, etc. Sometimes a reverse fraction is used: 20 km per division, 800 meters per battalion ... The combat manuals also indicate quite specific requirements for the density of the formation of battle formations - both on the offensive and on the defensive.

So, Mr. Isaev calculated the distance from the Baltic to the Black Sea (and he calculated correctly, taking into account the bizarrely winding border line), divided the kilometers by the number of divisions in the First Strategic Echelon of the Red Army and came to an indisputable conclusion: there was no way to contain the offensive of the Wehrmacht ! One division accounts for many more kilometers of the front of defense than established by the combat regulations. Defeat was inevitable!

The audience was extremely pleased with this sad conclusion ("Finally! Everything is so simple, and understandable, and according to science!"), And I was unspeakably upset. Do they really not teach anything at school anymore? If A is greater than B, then the quotient of dividing A by C will always be greater than the quotient of dividing B by C. For any, mind you, C. The number of Soviet and German divisions can be divided by the width of the front, the depth of Lake Baikal, the length of the tail of Zhukov's horse - in any case, with any tricks, the indicator for the Red Army will be MORE! And if 150 Soviet divisions were not enough for defense, then how could 120 German divisions be able to advance on such an endless

front? And how to attack! Isaev's second idea ("treasure sword and the golden ratio") is simply stunning with its ... hmm, beauty. The "golden section" is the organizational structure of the German tank division (***"The Germans came to their "golden section" of the organization of tank troops: for 2-3 tank battalions in the Wehrmacht tank division there were 4 (or 5, if you count with a motorcycle) motorized infantry battalion ... Exactly such an organization of tank troops allowed the Germans to reach the walls of Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev)*** . A division formed in accordance with such proportions is, according to Mr. Isaev, an all-destroying "sword-hoarder". And what about the Red Army? ***"If you call a spade a spade, then the Soviet side did not have an effective organizational structure like a "tank division". The presence of organizational structures with the name "tank division" should not be misleading - they were unable to solve the tasks of an independent tank formation ... These divisions were overloaded with tanks*** (highlighted by me. - *M.S.* ) ***and underloaded with motorized infantry and artillery*** ". [22]

The enchanting phrase about "the overload of tank divisions with tanks" is persistently repeated on dozens of pages. Soviet tank forces, the most powerful in the world, are declared non-existent only on the grounds that the structure of the Red Army tank division differed from the corresponding German structure mod. 1941, and the last



is declared an unsurpassed ideal of perfection, allowing miracles to be performed.

This whole "theory" is sent to the scrap by a simple reminder that in the Red Army there were divisions of the "golden section" itself. Of course, we are talking about the motorized division of the staff of July 1940. Everything in it is structurally exactly the same as in the Wehrmacht tank division: one tank, two motorized rifle and artillery regiments. Both the ratio of the number of tanks and people, and the composition of the weapons of an artillery regiment are quite comparable. Here are just a "miracle", if it happened, then in a

completely different direction ... As for the "overload" of Soviet tank divisions with tanks, then this "overload", alas, existed only in theory. In practice, by the beginning of the war, the average number of tanks in a division was 208 units (the Germans had an average of 200 tanks in the divisions of the Eastern Front). Further - worse; in a few days (in the best case, in a couple of weeks), even in the few divisions initially "overloaded" with tanks, a dozen tanks remained, but they didn't begin to fight better from this. The Germans, from the first days and hours of the war, decisively broke the organizational structures of peacetime - in the tank divisions, "battle groups" of the most diverse number and composition were formed, which led the offensive, not at all bothering with the goldenness of their "section" ...

A military failure, especially a quick and crushing defeat, inevitably entails the search for spies and suspicions of treason. In principle, this version is not as crazy as it might seem at first glance - if it is known for certain that dozens of Red Army generals, being in captivity, actively cooperated with the enemy, then there is nothing incredible in the assumption that some could start working on enemy before being taken prisoner. Moreover, for all my dislike of the "conspiracy theory" and other conspiracy schemes, I cannot but admit that the version of the "conspiracy of the generals" is the first (from those listed in this review) that, at least theoretically, can be adequate to the event.

The poor design of the lubrication unit of the upper left tank track roller or the insufficiently "golden" organizational structure of the division are details that are initially unsuitable for explaining a catastrophe of this magnitude that occurred in the summer of 1941 with the Red Army. But the betrayal of generals is a serious matter, which can have the most devastating consequences. Finally, some real facts of actions (and to an even greater extent - inaction)

high command on the eve of the war do not fit even the broadest framework of boundless Russian slovenliness. The point is small - it

remains to find the conspirators, to identify their intent, plan, contacts with the enemy. Nothing like this has been done to this day. What our noble conspiracy theorists write about (Kozinkin, Martirosyan, Mukhin) is so absurd that only those who, without unnecessary arguments, believe in "both in a dream, and in a chokh, and in a bird's frenzy" can take it seriously. The notorious "conspirator generals" behave somehow very illogically: they do not try to unite and coordinate their efforts, but "change one by one", one after another, from month to month: from the encirclement and death of the Western Front in June 41 through catastrophe near Kiev (September 1941) and Vyazma (October 1941) to a crushing and shameful defeat in the Crimea and near Kharkov in May 1942. To their misfortune, the writers of the "conspiracy theory"

unanimously attacked Army General D.G. Pavlov, commander of the Western Front; Their "trouble" is that this story (unlike many similar ones) is well known - the protocols of the interrogation and trial of Pavlov were published back in 1992. It follows from the documents that even the "investigation" conducted by known methods could not find any traces Pavlov's connections with the Germans. It is also worth noting that on the night of June 22, the "traitor" Pavlov, without permission from Moscow (!), gave the order for a combat alert with the opening of the "red packets". In the future, he did not make even the slightest attempt to go over to the enemy (which, in the situation of the complete collapse of the front, was not at all difficult), moreover, he obediently "carried his guilt" to Moscow, where he was called "on the carpet" in the first days of July; having received a new appointment (deputy commander of the Western Front), he immediately left Moscow for the front.

Finally, the absence of the slightest attempt on the part of the mythical "conspirators" to do the only thing that could lead the "conspiracy" to success: to arrest (or kill) Stalin, causes extreme astonishment. The "conspirators" also forgot to appeal to the people, the army, the Red Army soldiers in German captivity with a call for an anti-Stalin uprising. Your will, but conspiracies do not suit you like that ...

The natural conclusion, the culminating point in the construction of the "conspiracy theory" was the idea that there was only one conspirator, and he made his way to the very top of state power, and his name was Stalin. This version has several options.

An unsurpassed record of absurdity was set by a certain Mr. Osokin. [23] His sensational "discovery" is that Stalin allegedly concluded with

Hitler the most secret agreement, according to which the Red Army was concentrated at the western borders of the USSR in order to get into the wagons and go ... to the shores of the English Channel, to conquer England! As a courtesy in return, Stalin allegedly allowed German troops to pass through the territory of the Soviet Union to Iran. However, Hitler vilely deceived Stalin: the Germans jumped out of the cars with machine guns and "rolled up their sleeves" (Mr. Osokin emphasizes the latter circumstance) and defeated the Red Army, which – again, under the terms of Stalin's secret agreement with Hitler – was traveling light to the English Channel, without shells and cartridges. As one of the indirect confirmations of his hypothesis, Mr. Osokin cites the fact that the personnel of some units of the Red Army were given shorts instead of underpants - in shorts, in his opinion, it is more convenient to cross the English Channel. It would seem

that this enchanting nonsense does not deserve even the slightest mention - however, other opinions have come to light. Osokin's book was published in excellent printing performance, then a "documentary" (how is it?) film was made with budgetary money, presented with great fanfare in Moscow; a talented "pioneer" gave many interviews for the central Russian media. It is really difficult to explain these miracles without resorting to conspiracy theories. Another (though not so extravagant) version was

expressed by retired spouses Y. Verkhovsky and V. Tyrmos. And they not only expressed it, but also materialized it in the form of a book published by the Olma-Press publishing house, known for its fruitful cooperation with the FSB archival service. **[24]** Moreover, according to the authors' statements, the book was included in a certain "list of recommended literature", which the Administration of the President of the Russian Federation allegedly sends out to governors and other high-ranking government officials.

Verkhovsky and Tyrmos elaborated on the long-held idea in the blogosphere that Stalin deliberately allowed Hitler to deliver a devastating first blow to the Red Army. For what? And in order to appear before the world and, above all, before the President of the United States as a "victim of aggression" and receive Lend-Lease assistance for this. The absurdity of such an assumption is obvious. The law (bill) on Lend-Lease had the official name "Act for the Assistance to Defense of the USA". It did not say anything about "aggression", "victim of aggression", etc. The law gave the President of the United States the right to independently - without the sanction of Congress - to decide on the transfer of weapons, ammunition, and other military equipment to countries whose support is important for

US defense. For US defense. The law did not provide for any "charitable purposes", any chivalrous "care for widows and orphans".

The United Kingdom became practically the first and main (in terms of total volume of deliveries) recipient of Lend-Lease. And this was by no means prevented by the fact that, formally speaking, the "first shot" was fired by the British: England declared war on Germany (and not vice versa), and it was British aviation that on September 4, 1939 launched the first bombing strike on enemy territory; the French army, the closest ally of Great Britain, was also the first to invade Germany on September 9, 1939. Of course, when deciding on the political and military support of England and France in their war against Nazi Germany, the President and the US Congress were guided not by legal chicanery on the topic "who fired first," but an assessment of the real goals of the war and the real interests of America. As for the "reputation" of Comrade Stalin, in June 1941 it was already too late to save it. After everything

that happened in 1939-1940, after the partition of Poland, defiantly and brazenly formalized by the "Treaty of Friendship and Borders" with Hitler, after the aggression against Finland and the annexation of the three Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), there is no chance to appear before the Americans Stalin did not have an innocent victim. "A plague on both your houses" - that's all that any US citizen could say about the fight for the redistribution of robbery booty between Stalin and Hitler, in whatever form this fight might start. And if, in the end, Great Britain and the United States recognized the USSR as their ally, then this was due to the harsh prose of "realpolitik", and not at all a romantic desire to help the "innocent victim of aggression." An outstanding idea was formulated by N. Volsky. He also believes that Stalin deliberately allowed Hitler to strike the first - and not just the first, but also a very successful - blow. Volsky explains the motives for such a decision

much more seriously: ***"The cadre army (and, more broadly, the population of the country as a whole) had no motivation for a serious war ... Already in Finland it turned out that a victorious march was not possible ... Therefore, in order to implement their plans - indeed, aggressive - Stalin needed to really motivate his subordinates, from marshals to shift foremen at the Ural plant. To force everyone to fight not for life, but for death, could only be a mortal threat to universal existence. [25]***

It sounds logical - but it does not at all resemble the style and method of Comrade. Stalin. As you know, the Boss was distinguished by great caution, restraint,

prudence - on the verge of cowardice (a little-known fact: Comrade Stalin did not sign the order to test the first atomic bomb, so they banged it with the signature of Comrade Beria). And what N. Volsky writes about required a readiness to take a desperate risk, because no one could predict in advance how the country and the army would react to the first defeats: "with a surge of cold fury and readiness to stand to the end" (so the Soviet ambassador in London I Maisky described the reaction of the British to the first Luftwaffe bombings) or mass desertion?

Finally, it is completely inconsistent with the intention of "letting Hitler win a little" the deployment of gigantic stockpiles of military equipment in the frontier districts. If Stalin's intentions were exactly as N. Volsky describes them, then two dozen rifle divisions would be left in the border zone "for slaughter", and the main forces of the personnel army, including the precious (in every sense of the word) mechanized corps, would be east of the Dnieper and Western Dvina ...

### ***Test***

It is no coincidence that we have devoted so much space above to the consideration of the arithmetic of the losses of the German and Soviet armies. It is the question of why the losses of the Red Army turned out to be ten times higher than the losses of the Wehrmacht that brings us to unraveling the dark "mystery" of the summer of 1941. These losses have a very different structure. If the Germans have an average of three wounded per killed, then in the Red Army the irretrievable losses are three to four times

greater than the sanitary losses. How can this be? Could the anatomy and physiology of Soviet and German people be radically different? Of course, it's not about anatomy at all; in the summer of 1941, irretrievable losses in units of the Red Army consisted mainly (in some cases almost entirely) of deserters and prisoners, while the number of those killed was 5-6-7 times less. "The troops dispersed in scattered groups through the forests," as General Boldin (at the beginning of the war, deputy commander of the Western Front)

writes in his memoirs. An analysis of the structure of personnel losses prompted the further direction of the study. The losses of military equipment turned out to be no less eloquent (their dynamics, structure, correlation with the losses of similar equipment before and after 1941, comparison with the losses of the enemy). After that, it remained only to "twist the sharpness" and carefully, day by day and hour to consider the real course of hostilities

the first weeks of the war. Thus, it was possible to form a complete picture of the military catastrophe in the summer of

1941. The results of the work were presented by me in a book called "Barrel and Hoops" (the first edition was published in 2004), then in 2008 a radically revised version of this book was published under the title "22 June. Anatomy of a disaster. The basic concept was developed and supplemented in the book June 23: M-Day. Quite indicative for understanding the real state of the Soviet Armed Forces is the history of the beginning of the 2nd Soviet-Finnish war, discussed in detail in the book "June 25 - Stupidity or Aggression?". The aviation "component" of the history of the defeat of the 41st year was devoted to the books "On Peacefully Sleeping Airfields" and the two-volume "New Chronology of the

Catastrophe". Ultimately, a certain "corpus of works" was formed, in which the following conclusion was considered in detail and substantively argued: the main cause of the defeat lies outside the sphere of problems of operational art, tactics, and the quantity and quality of weapons. In the most concise formulation, the answer to the question about the cause of the defeat can be reduced to three words: THE ARMY DID NOT FIGHT. On the battlefields of 1941, not two armies met, but the Armed Forces of Nazi Germany, organized and working like a well-oiled clockwork, on the one hand, and a huge armed crowd on the other. The reasons

for the transformation of the Red Army into an uncontrollable crowd had nothing to do with the notorious "lack of communications." **And the cause, and the consequence, and the main content of the process of spontaneous disintegration of the army was the mass failure to comply with orders, mass desertion (both overt and covert), mass surrender.** The Soviet Union was not ready for war from the point of view of the "human factor". In complete contradiction to what Soviet propaganda had been drumming in for decades, the Red Army was inferior to the enemy not in the number of cannons, tanks and machine guns, but in the readiness, ability and desire of soldiers to do their duty. In a clash with a real, stubborn and persistent enemy, it turned out that **the Red Army had many tanks, but little motivation for armed struggle.**

Six years ago, in the preface to Anatomy of a Catastrophe, I wrote: ***"The source base used has a clear drawback: it is incomplete, fragmentary and compiled mainly by precisely those people who, by virtue of their official and party duties, had the goal of hiding the truth about the circumstances and reasons for the catastrophic defeat of the Red Army ... Strictly speaking, in this book there is not a single***



***new document or fact .***" The book that you now hold in your hands is made in a completely different way - it fundamentally and consistently ignores all and any writings of Soviet "historians"; if they are found a couple of times in the list of used literature, then this means that they were used as an illustration of some outrageous lies.

The same fate befell the memoirs of Soviet generals; God is the judge of all of them, but today, having the opportunity to compare with real documents and facts what they wrote (or, more precisely, what the ideologically savvy "literary workers" wrote for them), it is difficult to get rid of the feeling of awkwardness and shame. And if there are sparkling grains of truth in this muddy stream, then the extraction of such "gold" is too laborious, tedious, unreliable; Today it is already easier to use primary archival documents.

My first books provided the reader with new conclusions from the well-known (more correctly and honestly, from the available, but ignored by two generations of historians) facts. In the last book, everything is exactly the opposite: there are no new (new in relation to my previous works) conclusions, all conclusions are "old", but this time they are backed up by thousands of pages of documents from Russian and German military archives; for the most part, these documents have never been published before. We can say that this book is a

"control work". Checking and refining previous books. You can also think of it as a "control shot" at a effigy of Soviet pseudo-history stuffed with sawdust; now he has a place - only in a landfill.

## **Part 1. The day before**

## Chapter 1.1 Red Army arr. 1941

In this chapter (as well as throughout the book as a whole), we will not discuss the process by which Soviet Russia, utterly devastated during the many years of war (from 1914 to 1920), turned into a powerful military power. Much has already been written about this, but in this case, in order to study and understand the course of hostilities in the first weeks of the Soviet-German war, we are interested not in the method, not in the process, but in the end result. We confine ourselves to a short quotation from one quite official document. On April 2, 2008, the State Duma adopted a special Statement dedicated to the memory of the Holodomor victims. There, in particular, it is said: ***“As a result of the famine caused by forced collectivization, many regions of the RSFSR, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Belarus suffered. From hunger and diseases associated with malnutrition, in 1932-1933, about 7 million people died there. The peoples of the USSR paid a huge price for industrialization, for the gigantic economic breakthrough that took place in those years ... ”***

Seven million. Not a single country in Western Europe (not counting Germany itself) suffered such sacrifices during the Second World War that Stalin's subjects, back in the so-called "peaceful years", brought on the altar of the forced militarization of the USSR. Stalin and his associates knew how to make people work. One can (and should) argue about how rationally these great works were organized in terms of the "price-result" criterion. In any case, the "price" bothered Stalin little, and the result was huge. Weighty, rough, visible. Cyclopean mountains of accumulated

weapons made it possible to create the world's largest land army, which by the summer of 1941 included **198 rifle** (including 19 mountain rifle), **61 tank, 31 motorized, 13 cavalry divisions. A total of 303 divisions.** As well as **94 corps** artillery regiments and **74 artillery regiments of the RGK 10 PTABRs** (anti-tank artillery brigade of the RGK), **16 airborne brigades** . According to the accepted tradition, we did not include in this list the very numerous units and formations of the NKVD troops.

### **Infantry division** The

basis of the armies of the first half of the 20th century, the main force in defense, the only tool with which it was possible to occupy the territory and secure it during the offensive, was the infantry .

***“Any map with the situation on the Eastern Front will show that both in the main directions of most defensive battles and in the areas of numerous breakthroughs, infantry divisions operated primarily” (Middeldorf).***

The main "brick", the main tactical unit was the infantry ("rifle", as it was called in the Red Army) division. When designing this very complex and multifaceted "brick" it was necessary to solve two problems. First, to ensure the maximum possible ability of the division to independent, autonomous actions; the division (ideally) should do everything itself: suppress the enemy with fire, provide its operations with reconnaissance and communications, blow up the bridge during the retreat, establish a ferry crossing during the offensive, repair its military equipment, treat sick horses and repair horse harness. Secondly, in all these components, a division of its own army should not be inferior to divisions of potential opponents. The last aspect is worth considering in more detail. Despite the fact that the composition, structure and armament of the rifle

division of the Red Army and the infantry division of the Wehrmacht are no secret today, despite the fact that on paper and on the Internet you can easily find all the necessary information, up to the full staffing of the division with a listing of all the saddlers, postmen, cattle drivers and propagandists assigned to it, illiterate arguments that “the Soviet division was twice as weak as the German one” still do not leave the pages of the writings of domestic “historians” and journalists.

Since we are talking about the infantry, we will start with the infantry units. A Red Army rifle division has three infantry (rifle) regiments, each with three battalions. And in a German infantry division there are three infantry regiments, three battalions each. There is an almost complete identity. Behind the word "almost" is hidden some, not fundamentally important, but the superiority of the Soviet division. Already at the level of the smallest particle - the rifle squad - there are a little more people in the Red Army division (11 instead of 10). In a German infantry regiment, a communications platoon, and in a Soviet infantry regiment, a communications company; the Germans have a sapper platoon, and in the regiment of the Red Army - a sapper company; there is no analogue of an air defense company and a foot reconnaissance platoon in the Wehrmacht infantry regiment at all. Ultimately, the total number of personnel of the infantry regiment of the Red Army is somewhat larger than the number of infantry regiments of the Wehrmacht: 3182

Of course, comparing the number of people alone says little in relation to the army of the 20th century (however, even in the battles of the 2nd century BC, riders were considered separately from infantrymen, archers were not

mixed "in one heap" with heavily armed men at arms, etc.). It is much more important to evaluate the armament of the Soviet and German infantry.

Machine guns were the basis of the fire system of infantry units and subunits [5]. In a Soviet division, one light machine gun per rifle squad, and in a German one, one light machine gun per squad. There are 12 light machine guns in a Soviet rifle company, and 12 in a German infantry company, 36 and 36 in battalions, respectively. Taking into account the armament of regimental-level units, there are 116 light machine guns in a rifle regiment of a Soviet division, and 115 in a German infantry

regiment. , i.e., more powerful machine guns, providing better accuracy and practical rate of fire, in the Soviet division are much larger. In a German infantry company there are no heavy machine guns at all, and in a rifle company of the Red Army there is a machine gun platoon with 2 "maxims". Each battalion, both Soviet and German divisions, has one machine gun company. In total, 54 heavy machine guns are recruited in the rifle regiment of the Soviet division, and only 36 in the German infantry. The difference in the density of fire is already quite noticeable.

The second (smaller) component of the firepower of infantry units were rifles. Their number was approximately the same (123 units in the rifle company of the Red Army and 130 in the infantry company of the Wehrmacht). The quality, more precisely, the type of weapons used, was significantly different. The German

infantryman was armed with a Mauser rifle, the bolt of which (just like on the Russian "three-ruler" Mosin) had to be pulled "back and forth" after each shot. At the same time, aiming was inevitably lost, and aiming had to be repeated again, as a result - a significant decrease in the practical rate of fire. On the eve of the war, the Red Army was re-equipped with a Tokarev self-loading rifle (SVT-38/40) with a magazine for 10 rounds, which provided a significantly higher rate of fire and density of fire for rifle units [6]. This rifle could at that time be considered one of the best examples of small arms in the world, which can be confirmed, in particular, by the fact that captured SVT were officially adopted by the Wehrmacht. According to the staffing table, the rifle company of the Red Army was to be armed with 96 SVT and 27 ordinary "three-rulers", with the

last to be armed with riders, clerks, messengers, fighters of the calculation of an easel machine gun and a mortar, i.e. those who had the need to shoot from a rifle could occur only in an emergency. There are only 27 rifle companies in the division. In order to fully provide them

self-loading rifles, 2.6 thousand SVT were required; in general, according to the staffing table of the rifle division, 3307 self-loading rifles were supposed to. In fact, by the beginning of the war, Soviet industry had produced about 1 million SVT, which was enough to equip all the rifle divisions of the Red Army with a large margin. In total, all types of rifles and carbines, in the Red Army,

there were 7740 thousand pieces. [30] An average of 33,000 for each of the 236 "estimated" rifle divisions [7]. Taking into account that according to the staffing table, the rifle division was supposed to have 10,420 rifles and carbines, the real situation can be described by the words "three rifles for one." Machine guns (especially easel "maxims", the production of which in Russia / USSR lasted for several decades) were also accumulated a lot. On average, 722 manual and 323 easel per "calculated division". Approximately double the regular requirement. As for the so-called "machine guns" (MP-40 in the Wehrmacht, PPD and PPSH in the Red Army), these are weapons chambered for a pistol cartridge, with a range of actual fire of no more than 200

meters. Their role in the overall fire system of an infantry (rifle) regiment was negligible. In the Wehrmacht, unit commanders (a total of 16 MP-40s in service with an infantry company), scouts, and sappers were armed with submachine guns, but at the same time, there were no special submachine gunner units in the staff list of the Wehrmacht infantry division at all (which, of course, did not exclude the possibility of creating impromptu battle groups armed with "machine guns" and causing panic in the rear of the demoralized enemy troops). In general, less than 5% of the personnel of the Wehrmacht infantry division were armed with submachine guns. In the Red Army, theoretically, this figure should have been 9% (1204 units per division), but in fact, by the beginning of the war, there were three times less.

The armament of an infantry regiment was not limited to small arms alone; in the armies of the middle of the 20th century, the infantry regiment had its own artillery weapons: mortars and light guns. The number and order of distribution of mortars in the Soviet and German divisions are exactly the same: 9 light (50-mm) and 6 medium (81/82-mm) mortars in each infantry (rifle) battalion, 3 more light mortars in the reconnaissance battalion. Total 84 easy and 54 medium

mortars per division.

The number and caliber of light regimental guns also completely coincide: six "three-inch guns" per regiment (however, taking into account two such guns in service with the reconnaissance battalion, the Wehrmacht infantry division had 20



light guns against 18 in the rifle division of the Red Army). But the artillery systems themselves were very different. The main task of regimental artillery is to, being directly in the combat formations of the advancing infantry, suppress enemy firing points (machine guns). Accordingly, neither a large firing range nor a special projectile power is required from such a gun, but the weight of the gun should allow the crew to roll it across the battlefield on their own.

The German command decided that the main thing for a regimental gun was light weight. As a result, a 75 mm caliber system was created, with an unusually low muzzle velocity (221 m / s, which is more consistent with the parameters of a mortar than cannon artillery guns) and at the same time very light - only 400 kg. Another feature of the German infantry gun was separate loading (the projectile and the propellant charge are not connected into a single design), which, in combination with the large elevation angles of the barrel, made it possible to fire at nearby targets with mounted fire at small charges. This had to be paid for by a significant decrease in the rate of fire compared to unitary loading.

The Red Army took a different path. Soviet 76-mm regimental gun mod. 1927 weighed twice as much as the German "light infantry gun", but also accelerated the projectile to a speed of 387 m / s (kinetic energy 3.5 times more); the use of a unitary shot provided a higher rate of fire. As a result: greater accuracy and range, the ability to hit small and moving targets, and at very short distances - even light tanks.

With the heavy artillery weapons of the infantry regiment, the Germans were clearly mistaken. The 150-mm "heavy infantry gun" was "not a mouse, not a frog, but an unknown little animal." There were no such systems in regimental artillery in any army in the world, neither before nor after. The huge weight (1750 kg in combat position) made it almost impossible to move the gun by calculation forces over rough terrain, and there were no mechanical conveyors for it in the infantry regiment. On the other hand, the very low muzzle velocity of the projectile (240 m/s, less than that of the Soviet 120 mm mortar) and the resulting short firing range (4700 m) made it impossible to use the system as a full-fledged howitzer (not to mention the fact that that in the structure of the infantry regiment there were no units - communications, adjustment, instrumental reconnaissance - that could ensure the combat use of a heavy howitzer) There were two such "miracle weapons" in the

Wehrmacht infantry regiment. And the rifle regiment of the Red Army was armed with four 120-mm

mortar. Four is twice as many as two, and that's not the whole difference. The Soviet mortar weighed six times less than the German "heavy infantry gun", and its movement on the battlefield did not create any special problems. The damaging effect (in artillery this is called the strange-sounding expression "projectile power") of a 16-kg mine of a 120-mm mortar was quite sufficient to destroy the main types of targets (machine gun nests, dugouts with a light overlap) - and nothing more was required from regimental artillery. The practice of war summed up the final result - starting from 1943, the Germans began to withdraw 150-mm guns from the armament of infantry regiments, replacing them with four 120-mm

mortars.

At the beginning of the war, all the artillery weapons assigned to the Red Army rifle regiment existed in kind. And with some margin. For each of the 236 "calculated" divisions, on average, there were 154 50 mm mortars (instead of 84), 62 82 mm mortars (instead of 54), 16 120 mm mortars (instead of 12), 20 regimental 76 mm cannons (instead of 18 ). **[30, 33]**

Let's sum up the first, short and indisputable result: in terms of its armament, the Soviet rifle regiment was in no way inferior to the infantry regiment of the Wehrmacht, and in many aspects it was

superior to it. A comparison of the weapons of the artillery of the rifle division of the Red Army and the infantry division of the Wehrmacht leads to an even simpler and more unambiguous conclusion. There are two artillery regiments in a Soviet division, five artillery battalions in total. A German infantry division has one artillery regiment, four artillery battalions in total. The divisional artillery of the Soviet division has 60 barrels, the German - 48 barrels. The total weight of the volley is, respectively, 1300 kg and 1100 kg. Obvious superiority in all three parameters.

However, the superiority of the artillery of the Soviet division is not exhausted by such simple arithmetic; we still need to evaluate the "trunks" themselves. But first, some necessary theory. All artillery

systems are divided into two main types: guns and howitzers. The difference between the two is best illustrated with a concrete example. The Wehrmacht was armed with a 105 mm cannon and a 150 mm howitzer. The weight of the systems in the combat position is almost the same (5640 and 5510 kg, respectively), the energy is also very similar (5.23 mJ and 5.82 mJ). But these megajoules are used in completely different ways: in a gun, a light 15-kg projectile accelerates to a speed of 835 m / s (which, by the way, is 2,5

times the speed of sound near the ground), the howitzer, on the other hand, throws a much heavier (43 kg) projectile at a speed of only 520 m / s.

The difference in technical parameters also causes a significant difference in the tactics of combat use. The cannon fires flat fire (at a distance of a shot, a high-speed projectile moves almost parallel to the earth's surface), direct fire at small and/or moving targets. The howitzer throws its projectile the way the battle catapults of the ancient world threw stones - high into the sky. Howitzer mounted fire is often conducted from closed positions (i.e., the opponents do not see each other, and fire control is carried out using external spotters - ground or air). The cannon is indispensable when firing at tanks, aircraft, embrasures of bunkers, but the howitzer is capable of hitting targets hidden behind the reverse slopes of heights. With an equal weight of the gun, the howitzer projectile will always be much heavier and more powerful; on the other hand, the howitzer has a low probability of hitting a small target, and howitzer fire control requires serious efforts and resources. As you can see, in relation to the comparison of howitzers with guns, it is absurd to use the words "better" or "worse"; these are different tools for solving different problems, and the solution of these problems

is equally necessary for victory in battle. That is why the total "howubization" of the artillery of the infantry division of the Wehrmacht should be recognized as a mistake. The German artillery regiment had only howitzers: 12 heavy 150 mm (one battalion) and 36 light 105 mm (three battalions). And if we add to this the absence of "normal" (i.e., with a high muzzle velocity) guns in regimental artillery, it turns out that there was no tool for hitting a point moving target in the Wehrmacht infantry division

at all.

The consequences of this clearly manifested themselves already in June 1941 (which will be discussed in dozens of documents that await us in the following sections of the book), when such a moving point target as the heavy KV tank appeared on the battlefield. German commanders and soldiers were horrified to find that they were simply unarmed in front of this enemy - anti-tank 37-mm "mallets" left only subtle dents on the armor of the steel monster, and there was no more powerful gun in the standard armament of the Wehrmacht infantry division [8]. The composition of the armament of artillery regiments of a rifle division

of the Red Army is much more reasonable, the possibilities of combat use are wider. Of the five divisions, three are howitzers (12 heavy 152 mm and 24 light 122 mm), one cannon (12 long-barreled 76 mm divisions) and one mixed (4

guns and 8 light howitzers). Taking into account the fact that the Soviet "light" howitzer of 122-mm caliber had one and a half times heavier projectile than the German 105-mm one, the howitzer artillery of the Soviet rifle division (44 barrels in total) gives a total salvo weight greater than the howitzer artillery of the German infantry division (48 trunks). And at the same time, in addition to howitzers, the commander of a Soviet rifle division also has 16 guns at his disposal, the energy of which made it possible to penetrate the frontal (i.e., the most durable) armor of any German tank at a kilometer range.

It will take us very little time to compare the anti-aircraft weapons of the Soviet and German divisions. Everything is simple here - there are no anti-aircraft weapons in service with the Wehrmacht infantry division. That is, not at all. It's hard to believe, it's hard to understand what and what the German generals were thinking about when compiling such a staffing table (there were no books by Soviet historians about how "at dawn, with a strike on peacefully sleeping airfields, all Soviet aviation ..." did not yet exist), but from attacks from the air of the German infantry division had nothing to fight back. And the rifle division of the Red Army has its own anti-aircraft division, which, according to the staffing table, relies on 8 automatic 37-mm guns and 4 medium 76-mm anti-aircraft guns. And this list of anti-aircraft weapons of the rifle division is by no means exhausted. Each rifle regiment has its own air defense company, which, according to the staffing table, is supposed to have 3 large-caliber (12.7 mm) DShK machine guns and 6 mounts of quad "Maxim" machine guns. In the artillery regiments, one quadruple installation was attached to each of the five divisions. Yes, one can agree that such anti-aircraft weapons could scare a pilot rather than shoot down an enemy aircraft - after all, a rifle division has different tasks than a fighter regiment, and if you managed to make the enemy nervous, deviate from the combat course, leave earlier time from a dive, then the anti-aircraft gunners of the military air defense did their job completely. Yes, in this component, the actual availability of weapons was very different from the standard one: 37-mm machine guns had just begun to enter the troops, DShK machine guns were also lacking everywhere; however, a selective acquaintance with the documents shows that 10-12 anti-aircraft "trunks" of various types were recruited in almost every division. Few, no doubt, but the Germans did not have a single one.

Now let's turn to such an important indicator for the armies of the middle of the 20th century as the availability of active anti-tank defense. At the level of an infantry (rifle) regiment, there is a complete identity - according to

12 anti-tank guns per regiment. Only guns are different: in the Red Army caliber 45 mm, in the Wehrmacht - caliber 37 mm. Some comrades (for example, Ph.D. A. Isaev) long and stubbornly explained to the public that ***"the characteristics of the 37-mm German and 45-mm Soviet guns with different calibers were similar both in terms of high-explosive action and in terms of the ability to destroy armor targets"***. [26] Miracles, however, do not happen, and the volume and weight of the body increases in proportion to the third power of geometric dimensions; accordingly, even if full geometric similarity is observed, a 45 mm caliber projectile will be 1.8 times heavier than a 37 mm caliber projectile. But no one obliged the Soviet designers to keep the geometric similarity, and they developed a fragmentation projectile weighing 2.14 kg for the 45-mm cannon, while the fragmentation projectile of the German 37-mm cannon weighed 0.62 kg -

three times less! It is also important to note here that the use of the "forty-five" as a light infantry weapon was not a forced improvisation - such a tactic for combat use was provided from the very beginning; as part of the standard ammunition load of 45-mm anti-tank guns, fragmentation shots accounted for three-quarters (!) of the total. And these shells were not only on paper - millions of 45-mm rounds were in warehouses, the 1941 plan provided for the release of 8.3 million fragmentation 45-mm rounds (and "only" 2.2 million armor-piercing ones). [27] As for the main

thing, i.e. the fight against enemy tanks, in this sense, the capabilities of the German 37-mm and Soviet 45-mm guns were indeed equal (despite the fact that, in terms of the initial kinetic energy of an armor-piercing projectile, the Soviet the system was twice that of the German one). Both of them confidently hit light tanks with bulletproof armor and turned out to be practically useless [9] when meeting with heavy tanks of the new generation (we will discuss this in more detail in the next chapter). If at the regimental level the number of anti-tank guns in

the German infantry and Soviet rifle divisions is the same, then at the next level there is a radical difference. The commander of a Soviet division has at his disposal an anti-tank division (18 45-mm guns), and the commander of a Wehrmacht infantry division has a whole anti-tank battalion [10] (three companies of 12, a total of 36 guns of 37 mm caliber). It would seem that in this case, the German division has a clear superiority.

But let's not jump to conclusions. The anti-tank battalion is all that the commander of the Wehrmacht infantry division can send to the area of the planned breakthrough of enemy tanks. There are no other guns capable of fighting tanks in the Wehrmacht infantry division (which is already

noted above). And for the commander of a rifle division of the Red Army, an anti-tank division is just one of many tools to fight tanks. There are also 16 long-barreled 76-mm cannons (muzzle velocity 650–680 m/s) in the artillery regiment. In the summer of 1941, they were guaranteed to penetrate the frontal armor of any Wehrmacht tank. There are even more powerful 76-mm anti-aircraft guns in the amount of 4 units in the air defense division. In total, this already gives  $18 + 16 + 4 = 38$  “trunks”. More than in the anti-tank battalion of the Wehrmacht infantry division, and incomparably better. And some rifle divisions managed to get 37-mm rapid-fire anti-aircraft guns before the start of the war, which could also be successfully used to fight against light tanks.

But that's not all. The division has a reconnaissance battalion. The reconnaissance battalion of a rifle division of the Red Army is half the size of the German reconnaissance battalion in terms of the number of personnel (273 and 623 people), but incomparably more powerful in terms of armament. The reconnaissance battalion of an infantry division of the Wehrmacht is, in fact, an ordinary infantry battalion of a reduced composition; it was often used as a forward detachment of the advancing infantry (which we will meet many times in the documents of the following sections of the book). He adds only three 37-mm guns to the general list of anti-tank weapons. And in the reconnaissance battalion of the Soviet rifle division, there are 16 T-37 / T-38 amphibious machine-gun tankettes and 10 BA-10 armored vehicles; the latter are armed with a 45 mm cannon mounted in a rotating “tank” (in appearance and design) turret. Here are 10 more anti-tank “trunks”, moreover, covered with armor and highly mobile.

Mobility is the most important requirement for VET units. A tank attack is always fleeting (a distance of 1.5–2 km from the line of deployment to the line of enemy trenches slowly creeps through the tank in 7 minutes). Accordingly, the anti-tank division, which arrived at the breakthrough site half an hour late, did not complete the combat mission and will no longer be able to complete it - the enemy tanks hid behind clouds of smoke and dust ... The problem of the high-speed anti-tank guns in the Wehrmacht was solved perfectly. To transport the 37-mm guns of the anti-tank division, a three-axle Kfz-69 vehicle was used. On the highway, this rather light (2450 kg) car with a 60-horsepower engine rushed at a speed of 70 km / h (though without a gun - the undercarriage of a 37-mm gun did not allow transportation at a speed of more than 40-50 km / h). As for cross-country ability, a car with two leading rear axles could be considered an “all-terrain vehicle” on the highways of Belgium and France, but not among Russian off-road.

The Soviet Union took a different path. The command of the Red Army decided that a means of transporting anti-tank guns should have a maneuverability no less than a tank. Such a machine - armored tracked tractor "Komsomolets" - was created on the basis of components and assemblies of the T-37 light amphibious tank. The tractor could tow guns weighing up to 2 tons (i.e., all existing and promising anti-tank guns), overcame a ditch 1.4 m wide, a ford 0.6 m, broke young Christmas trees with an armored nose up to 18 cm in diameter, turned around on a site with a diameter of 5 meters. Due to the very low specific pressure of the tracks on the ground (0.58 kg / sq. cm versus 0.9–1.0 for German tanks), the Komsomolets had better maneuverability than any enemy tank. At the same time, the tracked vehicle was armed with a machine gun in a ball mount, developed a speed of 47 km / h (on the highway, without cargo and trailer) and 11 km / h with a full load (gun on a trailer, ammunition in the back) over rough terrain.

From 1937 to 1941 inclusive, 7780 units of such miracle machines were produced, and by the beginning of the war there were about 6.7 thousand Komsomol members in the Red Army units. **[31]** For 18 guns of an anti-tank division, according to the staffing table of a rifle division, 21 tractors rely. Thus, simple arithmetic shows that it was possible to fully equip 319 divisions with the available number of Komsomol members - which is almost one and a half times more than their actual number [11]. As of June 1, 1941, there were 3,447 units of the T-37/T-38/T-40 amphibious tanks mentioned above. **[32]** On average, 15 tanks per division, i.e., almost complete manning. These tanks, of course, sailed poorly - worse than a pleasure boat, but they could overcome a forest river without a ford and a bridge, and tow an anti-tank gun to a firing position. Absolutely unique was the level of motorization of howitzer artillery of the rifle

division of the Red Army. For three divisions (36 howitzers), according to the staffing table, 72 tractors (caterpillar tractors), 90 trucks, 9 special and 3 cars were supposed to. Of these, 36 tractors were used to tow guns, 27 pulled ammunition trailers, 9 were kept in reserve to replace those that failed. German gunners could not even dream of such a luxury - in the infantry division of the Wehrmacht, all artillery is horse-drawn. To the obvious advantages of a caterpillar tractor (power, maneuverability, ability for non-stop, fatigue-free movement) one should add one more, extremely important for the war of the middle of the 20th century - a tractor, in

unlike a poor animal, does not begin to convulse at the sight and sound of a low-flying aircraft. Specialized

artillery tractors were not enough even for primary consumers - mechanized corps, so the howitzer regiments of rifle divisions were equipped with conventional tractors (STZ-3, ChTZ-60, ChTZ-65) with 52–65 hp motors. The towing speed was, of course, low (6-8 km / h), but quite acceptable for the artillery of a rifle division - the guns did not lag behind the soldiers walking on foot. As for the cross-country ability, in the autumn thaw on the Russian roads-directions, the caterpillar tractor was out of competition.

In order to manage a huge, complex, multi-link colossus called an "infantry division", you need a reliable connection. As "known" to everyone and everyone, there was no communication in the Red Army, since the saboteurs cut all the wires, and no one in the army had heard of the radio. Even those who have not read anything else about the history of the war "know" about these saboteurs. And this is not accidental - there really were saboteurs. Each of the four tank groups of the Wehrmacht was given one company of saboteurs from the Brandenburg Special Purpose Unit. In subsequent chapters, we are waiting for documents in which we will find a concrete answer to the question of how this myriad horde of saboteurs was used. It will also become clear what real process was hidden behind the words "communication in the units and formations of the Red Army was lost." For now, let's return to dry numbers, and first we will deal with the simplest - with the geometry of the theater of operations. The field manual

(PU-39, paragraph 375) set the width of the division's defense line at 8-12 km (in the offensive it is even less). In reality, it was not always possible to comply with these norms, and we will proceed from the fact that the division is defending on a wide front of 20 km. The division has a neighbor on the left and a neighbor on the right, we will assume that they also have 20 km of front. Divisions, as a rule, are part of a rifle corps, whose headquarters is located 20–30 km from the front line. Thus, the commander of a rifle division needs communication with regiments subordinate to him (5-6 km to them), communication with a higher headquarters (20-30 km), communication with the commanders of neighboring divisions (the same 20-30 km maximum). As a result, a distance of

At such a distance, an operational report can be transmitted to the headquarters of the corps simply by messenger. This is the most noise-proof communication channel of all that you can think of. Walking for this is not at all necessary: the rifle division has a whole communications battalion equipped with 6 riding horses, 3 motorcycles, 1 passenger



a car and 3 BA-20 armored vehicles (the saboteur will definitely not cope with them). In addition, 18 service dogs are kept in the battalion, just in order to send encrypted messages with them. At a distance of 10–20 km, signal flares, bonfires, colored smoke, etc., may well serve as a “means of communication”.

So, with such means of communication (though without motorcycles and cars), Suvorov and Napoleon fought, and they did great! The telephone appeared at the end of the 19th century. There were many telephones in the Red Army, namely, 252,376 units as of January 1, 1941. **[28]** On average, more than 800 telephones for each of the 303 divisions. Telephone sets must be connected by wires. There were wires too. As of June 1, 1941, the Red Army had 71,000 km of 2-wire telephone cable, 315,000 km of 1-wire telephone cable, and 35,000 km of telegraph cable. **[29]** So many wires could wrap the Earth around the equator 10 times. In terms of one division, an average of 1,400 km of wire is obtained.

In order not to carry heavy coils with wire on oneself, there are 11 trucks in the communications battalion. The wires must be rolled out, laid, connected to the devices. This requires people. People were. Each rifle regiment of the Red Army has a communications company. 60 people in each. There are 278 people in the communications battalion of the division. And another communications platoon as part of the reconnaissance battalion. There are about the same number of signalers in one division as there were German saboteurs on the entire Eastern Front.

In a rifle division, whose advance rate, even in the most optimistic calculations, did not exceed 10 km per day, wired telephone lines could in principle provide all the necessary communications. Nevertheless, the infantry of the Red Army also relied on radio communications. 24 radio stations in each rifle regiment. 37 radio stations in a howitzer artillery regiment, 25 radio stations in a light artillery regiment, 10 in an anti-aircraft battalion, three radio stations in the division's communications battalion, three radio stations in a reconnaissance battalion ... There are 153 (one hundred and fifty three) radio stations according to the staff list in a rifle division. Remember this figure, dear reader. And understand that when "historians" of a certain ideological orientation begin plaintive lamentations on the topic "only 30 percent of the district divisions were provided with radio communications," they tell you about how saboteurs cut the wires of the division, in which there were not 153, but only 46 radio stations.

Now let's move from quantity to quality. Radio stations were divided into so-called. regimental and battalion. As a "regimental"

as a rule, the 5-AK radio station was used (adopted for service in 1939). Transmitter power 20 W, range 25 km for telephone and 50 km for telegraph communications. As you can see, the "regimental" radio station could practically provide communication in the "corps division" link. And there should have been 19 such walkie-talkies in the division according to the staffing table (in particular, 3 in the reconnaissance battalion). Light portable radio stations with a power of 1.5-3 W (RB, 6-PK, RBC, RBS, RRU, etc.) were used as "battalion" ones. Contrary to popular belief, among them were radio stations operating in the VHF band (for example, the RDD, which had 58 fixed settings in the range of 33.25–40.5 MHz).

This is theory. But what is it really? The actual equipment of the Red Army with radio communications as of June 1, 1941 was as follows: **6,729 5-AK radio stations and 41,735 battalion radio stations** of the above types. [29] In fact, there were even more of them, since the document from which these figures are taken is called the "Statement of the Availability of Communications in the Military Districts," and in addition to the districts, there are also central institutions of the Armed Forces. In particular, in the Western OVO (most of the stories about "saboteurs who cut" are connected precisely with the first days of the war in Belarus), there were 708 5-AK radios and 5011 battalion radios. On average, 10 regimental and 73 battalion radio stations for each "consumer" (44 divisions of all types and 25 separate artillery regiments). Of

course, the headquarters of large formations were not forgotten either. To organize communications in the "corps-army-front" link, radio stations RSB and RSMK (power 80 W), 11-AK and RAF (power 500 W) were mass-produced. By June 1, 1941, there were a total of **1638 pieces** : On average, 18 pieces for each rifle and mechanized corps (and in the corps there are three, at most four divisions, each of which was entitled to one SSB, plus communication lines of the corps command with neighbors and headquarters Army). In particular, in the Western OVO there were 89 powerful 11-AK and RAF (they are indicated in one line) and 57 RSB - and this is not counting 34 stationary army radio stations of various types. In the neighboring Kiev district, respectively, 107, 92 and 53.

How was all this used? This will be discussed in detail in later chapters, but one noteworthy document is worth mentioning right now. In the early days (the number in the document is illegible) of July 1941, the Military Council of the 5th Army of the Southwestern Front sends a directive to the headquarters of the corps subordinate to it, which begins with the following facts:

***“Throughout all the military operations of our Army, radio communication with mechanized corps, as the only means of communication, has been extremely unstable due to the fault of the communications chiefs of the corps. It has been established that radio communication, as a rule, disappears with the onset of night, while atmospheric data for radio operation at night are the most favorable. This suggests that either the work is stopped due to fear of being located, or the radio operators are simply sleeping. As a rule, when folding walkie-talkies for movement, this is not reported. The radio signal table is completely ignored, and signals are not used to report the hull. In particular, throughout the entire duration of the actions, an ugly attitude to the issue of establishing radio communications is observed on the part of the headquarters of the 22nd MK. According to the report of Captain Filimonov, the radio 22 MK did not work at all for 2 days due to the fact that it was stuck in a swamp, and no one reports about it. Moreover, by order of the chief of communications of this corps, the radio is switched to work only for reception - again because of the fear of***

Let us return, however, to the rifle division of the Red Army and the comparison of its capabilities with the infantry division of the Wehrmacht. There were also such parameters in which the German division indisputably surpassed the Soviet one. First of all, motorcycles. The infantry division of the Wehrmacht was supposed to have 530 motorcycles (including 190 with sidecars), and there were only 14 of them in the state of the Soviet division. , couriers, messengers, doctors, etc. Another line in the list of equipment of the division is cars. The Germans have 394 of them against 19 in the rifle division of the Red Army.

Arithmetic superiority is evident. Tactical is not as great as it might seem at first glance. Most of the command staff of the Soviet rifle division had to ride (for this, 616 riding horses were provided in the state of the division). There is no doubt that a German officer in a car moved through space faster and with incomparably greater comfort - as long as this space was the cobbled pavements of good old Europe. In the autumn thaw, in those directions that in Russia were called "roads", the car either stopped at all, or it had to be towed by a pair of horses (there are corresponding photos) ...

Be that as it may, but the bulk of the personnel of the Wehrmacht infantry division walked. All artillery (except anti-tank) was horse-drawn. It was these two facts that determined the possible pace of the march. The abundance of light vehicles (motorcycles and cars) could not change anything here - although, of course, their presence increased the overall combat potential of the division. As for trucks (and this is the mobility of the rear, the delivery of ammunition), the staffing figures are quite comparable (615 in the Wehrmacht infantry division and 529 in the Soviet rifle division). We note right away that such a number of vehicles could appear in a Red Army division only after an open mobilization.

The last - both in order and in importance - is the number of people. There were 16% more people in the infantry division of the Wehrmacht than in the rifle division of the Red Army (16,859 versus 14,483). The explanation for this is the simplest. First of all, in the German division there are more numerous rear areas, there are about 2 thousand people more than in the Soviet division. Secondly, the German staffing almost universally assumes a higher number of people per weapon; so, for example, the calculation of the heavy machine gun of the Germans consists of four (!) People, and, of course, only one shoots. The Germans in the artillery regiment have 2696 people for 48 guns, and in two artillery regiments of the Soviet rifle division 2315 people for 60 guns, etc. Finally, the Wehrmacht infantry division has a whole "field reserve battalion" (876 people in the state), which was not at all in the Soviet division.

Summary. The combat units and subunits of the Soviet rifle and German infantry divisions have an approximately equal number of people and weapons, the artillery of the rifle division is more powerful and mobile (mechtyag), there are more air defense and anti-tank weapons in the Soviet division, more vehicles and rear structures of the Germans. In general, they are quite equivalent compounds. And this, of course, is not an accidental coincidence - the General Staffs in Moscow and Berlin closely followed the development of the potential enemy's Armed Forces. **Artillery and**

**ammunition** Ruthless "god of war" in the armed conflicts of the first half of the 20th century was artillery. Not an elegant, swift fighter aircraft, and not a formidable tank, but a simple and unpretentious-looking mortar and cannon with an avalanche of fire destroyed defensive fortifications and command posts, quickly and ruthlessly destroyed the enemy who had risen to attack (on their account, half of all killed and wounded in 2 th MV), paved the way for their tanks and infantry.

Let us explain what has been said with one, rather conditional, but indicative calculation - let's compare the capabilities of a howitzer artillery regiment and a bomber aviation regiment. A corps artillery regiment consists of three divisions, a total of 36 guns. Let's assume that these are 152 mm howitzers. The consumption standard "for a day of intense combat" is 72 shells for them; shells are different, but let's take a typical 40-kg high-explosive fragmentation. In total, the regiment is able to "lay out", as the gunners say, 104 tons. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that the standard mentioned above is a calculated supply unit, it has nothing to do with the technical capabilities of the gun. 72 howitzer shells without much calculation stress and equipment will shoot in one hour. In the presence of shells (and with the necessary breaks to cool the barrel), the figure of 104 tons can be doubled, and tripled,

and quadrupled ... The bomber regiment of front-line aviation in the summer of 1941 is 60 SB bombers. The cost of material resources for armament, equipment, maintenance of the air regiment and airfields, for the training of pilots and ground technical personnel is simply incomparable with the cost of an artillery regiment. And what do these costs result in? In the rarest cases, a bomber regiment carried out 60 sorties per day and dropped 36 tons of bombs on the enemy (a typical load was six FAB-100 bombs). Yes, and these tons of planes could only lift during the day, in good weather, and artillery threshed the enemy around the clock and all year round. To complete the picture, it must also be taken into account that artillery - with careful adjustment and high-quality work of spotters - hits very accurately, and the "horizontal bombers" of that era, even in polygon conditions, barely fell into a circle with a radius of 300 meters [12]. We note

right away that Comrade Stalin loved and appreciated artillery, he clearly understood its role and significance. At a meeting on the results of the war with Finland (April 17, 1940), he said: ***"Modern warfare requires mass artillery. In modern warfare, artillery is God ... Whoever wants to rebuild in a new modern way, he must understand that artillery decides the fate of the war, mass artillery ... "Understanding has found its expression*** in concrete deeds - see Table 1 (compiled according to 3 and 33 ).

|  | СССР   | Германия |
|--|--------|----------|
| 82-мм (81-мм) минометы                     | 14 524 | 11 767   |
| 76-мм (75-мм) полковые и горные пушки      | 6785   | 4176     |
| 76-мм дивизионные пушки                    | 8513   | —        |
| 120-мм минометы (150-мм «пехотные орудия») | 3872   | 867      |
| 105-мм гаубицы                             | —      | 7076     |
| 122-мм гаубицы                             | 8124   | —        |
| 107-мм (105-мм) пушки                      | 862    | 760      |
| 152-мм (150-мм) гаубицы                    | 3817   | 2867     |
| 122-мм пушки А-19                          | 1255   | —        |
| 152-мм пушки-гаубицы МЛ-20                 | 2603   | —        |
| 203-мм (210-мм) гаубицы                    | 871    | 388      |

**Table 1**

As you can see, for all positions, for all main calibers of artillery systems, by the time the war began, the Red Army had a larger number of guns than its opponent. The complete absence in the infantry division of the Wehrmacht of at least some analogue of the Soviet divisional cannon has already been noted above. On the other hand, in the USSR, 76-mm "divisions" were made in such excess that they were sometimes put into service with artillery batteries of rifle regiments, where light short-barreled 76-mm guns were supposed to be standard. As the most massive divisional howitzer (and this is the main worker of the war), the Red Army uses the 122-mm system, the weight of the projectile of which significantly (by 45%) exceeds the weight of the projectile of the 105-mm German howitzer (22 kg versus 15 kg). Even more noticeable is

the superiority of the artillery of the Red Army at the next level, in corps and armies. Separate artillery battalions attached to Wehrmacht infantry formations used 105-mm cannons and the same 150-mm howitzers that were in service with artillery regiments of infantry divisions. At the stage of preparation for the invasion of the USSR, it was decided to introduce a heavy division (12 150-mm howitzers or 8 such howitzers and 4 105-mm guns) into the artillery regiment of tank divisions; to do this, acting according to the "Trishkin caftan" method, the Wehrmacht command had to disband 17 separate artillery divisions. Ultimately (and not yet taking into account the artillery of the

so-called "high power", i.e. howitzers of a caliber of more than 200 mm and guns of a caliber of 150 mm or more) by June 1941, the Wehrmacht had in its composition, on all fronts and directions, 33 cannon, 38 howitzer and 12 so-called. "mixed" (8 howitzers + 4 guns) divisions. There are 83 divisions in total. At that time, 133 separate artillery regiments (94 corps,

12 cannon RGK and 27 howitzer RGK). **(3, 19, 33 )** There were one and a half times more regiments than the Germans had divisions! These regiments were of different structure, but mostly of a three-divisional composition. The available number of guns (a total of 4.7 thousand units) was basically enough for their full complement. But no one was going to stop there - the plan for the production of artillery weapons for 1941, approved on February 7, 1941, assumed the production of another 2 thousand guns (300 107 mm caliber guns, 600 122 mm caliber guns and 1100 152 mm howitzer guns ). **[34]** Multiple superiority by significant superiority in performance characteristics of artillery systems (see Table 2)

quantitative

supplemented

|                            | Вес  | Вес снаряда | Дальность, км |
|----------------------------|------|-------------|---------------|
| 105-мм пушка К.18          | 5640 | 15          | 19,1          |
| 150-мм гаубица s.F.H.18    | 5510 | 44          | 13,3          |
| 122-мм пушка А-19          | 7155 | 25          | 20,4          |
| 152-мм пушка-гаубица МЛ-20 | 7130 | 43          | 17,2          |

**Table 2**

Surprisingly, but true - the only Wehrmacht artillery system suitable for firing at a distance in the "20-km range" was the 105-mm K.18 gun [13]. However, in terms of projectile weight, this system cannot be compared with the Soviet A-19 and ML-20. As for the main German 150-mm howitzer, it, having the same projectile weight as the ML-20, was inferior to the Soviet corps guns in the firing range by 4-7 km. Such a quantity is already beginning to turn into quality, because in the conditions of an artillery duel (counter-battery combat, in strict military language), the difference in reach by 4-7 km allows - if there is the necessary "human factor", i.e. a competent commander and trained gunners - to suppress the enemy battery, while remaining in relative safety. The magnificent guns A-19 and ML-20 remained in service with the Soviet army for several decades after the end of the 2nd MV, and in the armies of the satellites of the USSR - until the end of the 20th century.

For the destruction of especially strong defensive structures (reinforced concrete bunkers), it was supposed to use heavy artillery systems (artillery of "large" and "special" power, according to the terminology adopted in the USSR). Soviet historians tirelessly emphasized that the fascination with heavy artillery systems clearly and convincingly demonstrates the aggressive aspirations of German militarism. Huge guns weighing 15-20 or more tons, on heavy wheeled, tracked or even railway platforms, were expensive, but, as you know, all of Europe worked for Hitler.

With the help of "all of Europe" (i.e., using Czech and French-made guns), the Wehrmacht managed to form 41 divisions, armed with 388 210 mm howitzers [14] and 40 heavy 173 mm guns. In addition, 7 divisions armed with 150-mm cannons were deployed (according to the state, each such division should have had 9 guns). [33] In total, almost 500 heavy artillery systems are recruited ("exotics" like 600-mm mortars, we will not discuss, because they did not play a noticeable role in the events of the summer of 1941). Europe did not work for Stalin, and his policy was,

as everyone knows, invariably peaceful. As a result, by June 1941, the Red Army had 871 203 mm howitzers, 47 newest 280 mm Br-5 mortars, and 38 150 mm Br-2 heavy cannons. [3] Total (excluding "exotics") 956 large-caliber artillery systems. The main structural unit was the howitzer regiments of the RGK of high power, three divisions each (there were two different states - 24 and 36 guns per regiment), which were armed with 203-mm B-4 howitzers. There were 33 such regiments deployed (according to other sources - 34), and this was one of the few structural elements of the Soviet artillery, in which the available number of guns was notably insufficient for full staffing in wartime states. As a result, they had to be content with just a double numerical superiority over the Wehrmacht.

True to its traditions [15], Soviet historical propaganda, silent about the real facts of the superiority of Soviet artillery, built a spreading myth about the Katyusha. Hundreds of books and newspaper articles told about how "retrogrades" from the Main Artillery Directorate hampered the development of this "wonder weapon", but the truth prevailed, the day before the start of the war, the BM-13 multiple launch rocket launcher was put into service, and already on July 14, 1941, the Katyusha battery dealt the first crushing blow . ***"The battery wiped the Orsha railway junction off the face of the earth. ...*** The combat effectiveness of the new weapon exceeded all expectations ... Subsequently, the Nazis took three echelons of the dead (where were they taken?) And the wounded ***from this sector of the front*** . In the future, ***"the Nazis tried, but until the very end of the war they could not create anything of the kind ."***

Indeed, there was nothing similar in service with the Wehrmacht. And not by accident. Powder rockets were known to the ancient Chinese, and in medieval chronicles there are scattered references to the use of something similar to a rocket during the sieges of fortresses. But for



In order to turn the New Year's "cracker" into a weapon system capable of not only "inducing panic terror on the enemy", but also destroying a given target, it was necessary to solve a number of complex scientific and technical issues. The first of these was the choice of a method for stabilizing the rocket's flight path.

The developers have chosen unguided missiles for aerodynamic stabilization. The missile is successfully used in military affairs, starting with a feathered arrow for a bow or crossbow. Simple, cheap, but for effective stabilization, a sufficiently high flight speed is needed (aerodynamic forces depend on the square of the air flow speed). The 82-mm (RS-82) aerodynamically stabilized rocket projectile was developed and successfully used by Soviet military aviation starting from the battles at Khalkhin Gol. For aviation, this was twice a good decision. First, by the time of launch, the rocket is already moving relative to the air at a speed of 100–120 m/s. Secondly, "everything is known in comparison" - against the backdrop of the main small arms of aircraft at that time (rifle-caliber machine guns and light 20-mm cannons), the RS-82 was an unusually powerful fire support tool for ground forces.

An attempt to use the same approaches to create a ground-based rocket artillery system inevitably led to a dead end. In order for it to have sufficient speed by the time the rocket left the rails, the rails themselves had to be made long (5 meters or more), which increased the dimensions and weight of the installation (the Katyusha launcher - of course, without taking into account the weight of the car - weighed 2200–2300 kg), and in the structure of the weight of the rocket, the main engine occupied most of it. However, even with these efforts and costs, the dispersion of rocket projectiles was enormous (according to the tables of 1942, with a firing range of 3000 m, the lateral deviation was 51 m, the deviation in range was 257 m). German engineers, who at the end of the 1930s became the absolute world leaders

in rocket science, took a different path. The rocket projectiles of the German army were stabilized by rotation, which was provided by the outflow of hot gases through a system of nozzles installed at an angle to the longitudinal axis of the projectile. Not only did this method of stabilization provide an incomparably greater accuracy of fire; for a rotating non-feathered projectile, the derailment velocity has almost no effect on the stability of the trajectory. This made it possible to make a low-velocity projectile, in which most of the weight is

on the warhead that hits the enemy; the guides themselves could be very short and light. The most widely used 6-

barreled launcher for 150-mm rockets (in the domestic literature is often called a "six-barreled mortar", which is technically incorrect), which in the stowed position weighed only 515 kg, could be towed by any car, horse team, rolled across the battlefield the effort of calculation. The principle of rotational stabilization, which does not require high projectile flight speed, made it possible to move from 150 mm to even heavier, 280 mm and 320 mm rockets. The warhead of the first was equipped with 45 kg of explosives (ten times more than in the 132-mm Katyusha projectile) and destroyed a brick house with a direct hit; The 320-mm rocket was equipped with 50 kg of fire mixture, capable of causing an area of 200 square meters. in fire with a flame height of up to 2 m. Thus, the Germans managed to create a highly effective weapon system that

occupied its specific "niche": a light, cheap, mobile unit capable of delivering a strike comparable to high-powered artillery fire at a short firing range. The final result of the "competition of designers" was summed up by the practice of combat use: already in 1943, work began in the USSR on the modernization of the Katyusha rocket using the spin-up of the projectile by the outflow of gases from obliquely located nozzles. The BM-14 and BM-24 systems adopted by the Soviet army in the early 1950s used non-feathered rotating rockets, which almost completely repeated the main technical solutions of German engineers. The Nebelwerfer system [16] was adopted by the Wehrmacht in 1940. By June 1941, at the time when papers on putting the Katyusha into service were still being signed in Moscow, the Wehrmacht included

18 divisions of rocket mortars ( 18 launchers each); they took part in the battles from the very first hours of the invasion of the USSR. Among all the components of artillery materiel, ammunition should be recognized as the most important. Ultimately, it is the projectile (mine) that is the "payload", for the sake of delivering which the entire huge complex, consisting of people, guns, artillery

tractors, trucks, communication lines, spotter aircraft, etc., works to the target. In MV, the low accuracy of firing was compensated by the huge consumption of ammunition (according to the standards, it was supposed to spend 60-80 shells to suppress one machine-gun point). As a result

even according to the simplest characteristic - in terms of total weight - artillery shells significantly exceeded the gun with which they were sent to the head of the enemy. So, established by

order of the NPO No. 0182 (by a strange irony of history, this order was signed on May 9, 1941), the ammunition load for the most massive 122-mm howitzer in the Red Army was 80 rounds. Taking into account the weight of the projectile, charge and capping (shell box), the total weight of one ammunition load (about 2.5 tons) was slightly more than the weight of the howitzer itself. One ammunition load, however, won't win much. As a rule, an offensive operation (which corresponds to 15–20 days in calendar terms) was planned to consume 4–5 rounds of ammunition [17], thus, the weight of the ammunition used during the operation was many times greater than the weight of the guns. In 1941, the Wehrmacht used about 580 kilotons of ammunition of all types on the Eastern Front, which is about 15 times the total weight of all artillery systems operating on the front.

Under the terms of the Versailles Peace Treaty, the victorious countries set severe restrictions for Germany: she had the right to have 1,000 artillery rounds for each of the 204 75 mm caliber guns and 800 rounds for each of the 84 105 mm howitzers in service with the Reichswehr. A total of 217 thousand shells. A meager - in comparison with the armies of the great powers - the number of guns and ammunition. When in the spring of 1935 Hitler announced Germany's withdrawal from the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, a little more than 4 years remained before the start of the world war. History gave Hitler little time, and nature - even less raw materials (with the extraction of copper, lead, tin, saltpeter in Germany, as you know, tension). The Soviet Union was in an incomparably better position; all the more indicative is the difference in priorities with which the two totalitarian dictatorships were preparing for war (see Tables 1, 3, 4)

**Table 3**

| Боеприпасы (млн. шт.)          | Германия | СССР |
|--------------------------------|----------|------|
| 81-мм (82-мм, 107-мм) минометы | 12,7     | 12,1 |
| 75-мм (76-мм) полевые пушки    | 8,0      | 16,4 |
| 105-мм (122-мм) гаубицы        | 25,8     | 6,7  |
| 150-мм (152-мм) гаубицы и г-п  | 7,1      | 4,6  |

**Table 4**

| Боеприпасы на один ствол:      | Германия | СССР |
|--------------------------------|----------|------|
| 81-мм (82-мм, 107-мм) минометы | 1100     | 600  |
| 75-мм (76-мм) полевые пушки    | 1900     | 1100 |
| 105-мм (122-мм) гаубицы        | 3650     | 800  |
| 150-мм (152-мм) гаубицы и г-п  | 1900     | 717  |

The situation, as we see, is rather paradoxical. Significantly superior to the Wehrmacht in terms of the number of guns of all major calibers, the Red Army was inferior to its future enemy both in terms of the total amount of accumulated ammunition (by June 1941, Germany had about 740 kilotons of medium-caliber cannon artillery shells, and the Soviet Union - 450 kilotons), and in specific the number of shells per barrel. Moreover, according to the latter indicator, the ratio of the resources of the parties is multiple.

It is no coincidence that the words "resource ratio" are used here instead of the short word "superiority". A lot of shells per barrel is neither good nor bad; **these are different approaches to war planning**. Several thousand shells per gun allow you to fight for a long time, carrying out one operation after another. A large number of "barrels" with a small number of projectiles for each of them is the ability to deliver one short but crushing blow. Hitler, as everyone knows, was preparing his army for a "blitzkrieg", a lightning war. What, judging by the figures in Table 4, was Stalin preparing for? However, the most accurate criterion for assessing the amount of

accumulated ammunition will be a comparison of the number of shells not with barrels, but with the tasks set. For example, according to the standards established at the end of the war on the basis of practical experience (and these standards many times exceeded pre-war ideas!) To destroy all fire weapons of a Wehrmacht infantry division, it was necessary to "lay out" 50 thousand shells of a 122-mm howitzer. And by the beginning of the war, 3.38 million rounds [18] for a 122-mm howitzer were concentrated directly in the five western border districts (not counting the center's stocks "loaded" for them) (an average of 10 rounds per gun). Thus, the available stock of shots should have been more than enough to defeat 60 divisions, that is, half of the German invasion army.

The second half did not have a better fate - in addition to 3.38 million 122-mm rounds, 2.79 million more powerful rounds for 152-mm howitzers and howitzers-cannons were accumulated in the western districts. And for the final "cleansing of the area" - another 7.2 million rounds for 76-mm regimental, mountain and divisional guns. And if this is not enough, then there are still 6.1 million rounds for 82-mm mortars.

The enemy tanks were not forgotten either. In total, in the five western border districts there were 6870 "forty-five" (according to other sources - 7520), and each of them had an average of 373 armor-piercing shots; this figure varied from 149 in Odessa to 606 in the Western District. If we consider at the very minimum (without taking into account

Leningrad and Odessa districts), then by the morning of June 22, 1941, 2.3 million armor-piercing 45-mm rounds were prepared for the battle with three thousand German tanks. On average - 700 per tank.

The 234,000 rounds for 203-mm B-4 howitzers delivered to the border districts deserve the closest attention. In 1944, in the course of grandiose offensive operations, the Red Army used up "only" 168,000 of these shells. One and a half times less. The 203-mm howitzer threw a 100-kg projectile at a distance of 18 km and was intended to destroy especially strong defensive structures (a special concrete-piercing projectile pierced the 1.5-meter-thick bunker ceiling). The presence of cyclopean mountains of concrete-piercing shells in the border districts (12 rounds of ammunition per gun) silently but firmly testifies to the exceptional seriousness of the intentions of comrade. Stalin...

Alas, serious mistakes were also made in providing the Red Army with ammunition, one of which cannot be explained by reasonable arguments: the troops had few armor-piercing rounds for the 76-mm cannon. Only 132 thousand pieces. The lack of armor-piercing 76-mm rounds significantly devalued two military-technical advantages of the Red Army: the presence in the armament of a rifle division of 16 long-barreled guns capable of penetrating the frontal armor of any German tank, and the presence of almost the same "three-inch" on tanks of new types (T-34 and KV). In the absence of armor-piercing shells, the latest Soviet tanks "sank" to the level of the German Pz-IV with a short-barreled 75-mm "cigarette butt".

And this is definitely bad. However, the word "little" always requires clarification - little compared to what? There were very few armor-piercing 76-mm rounds in comparison with the real possibilities of the Soviet economy, which made it possible to accumulate by June 1941 12 million armor-piercing 45-mm rounds, 16 million high-explosive fragmentation 76-mm and 5 million anti-aircraft (i.e., much more complex and expensive) 76-mm shots. Looking at these figures, it is difficult to understand - what prevented the mass production of 76-mm BR rounds? There was enough time: the T-34 and KV tanks were adopted by the Red Army on December 19, 1939; the divisional 76-mm gun F-22 was put into service even earlier, in

1936. The picture becomes not so hopeless if we compare the number of BR shells with the task for which they are used. Armor-piercing shells are not fired "at the squares", they are not set up "screens of fire", they do not have to be spent in millions. In a duel situation "tank -

cannon "shoot many times, the gun simply does not have time ... As of June 22, 1941, as part of the German invasion army, there were about 1400 targets for which it would be worth spending a three-inch armor-piercing projectile (strictly speaking, even less, because among those taken into account in this figure of medium tanks Pz-IV there were a number of vehicles of the early series with 30 mm frontal armor). Dividing the actual available shells by this number, we get an impressive result: 95 units of 76-mm armor-piercing shells per one medium German tank or self-propelled guns with reinforced frontal armor. But this is not enough! Yes, of course,

war is not solitaire, and in war you cannot ask the enemy to fit medium tanks to the firing positions of 76-mm "divisions", and other lightly armored trifles - closer to the anti-tank "forty-five". But even if the circumstances of the battle force us to spend scarce 76-mm BR shells on any armored tracked vehicle that appeared in the sight (and there were no more than 4 thousand of those in the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front, including machine-gun tankettes and light self-propelled guns), then even then, purely arithmetically, the troops The Red Army had 33 shells available for one target. With skillful use, it is quite enough for a guaranteed defeat. All this irrefutable arithmetic, unfortunately, does not take into account the most important thing - the "human factor", which

manifested itself in how the available resources were distributed and used. Two months before the start of the war, April 24, 1941, Deputy. People's Commissar of Defense, head of the GAU, Marshal Kulik, sent telegrams to the western border districts with the following content: ***"Send 76-mm armor-piercing shots to the troops according to the following calculation: for each gun in rifle divisions - 6, in cavalry divisions - 12, motorized divisions - 12, fortified areas - 12, armored trains - 10, casemate guns - 20, caponier guns - 10, on KV tanks - 25, on T-34 tanks - 13. [35]*** And then comes another, very interesting phrase: ***"The calculation was made for the combat strength by 1.1.42, based on the actual availability of armor-piercing shots by 1.7.41."*** That is, the actual number of BR-shots was taken into account (with a small error for the difference in dates between April 24 and July 1), but much more "trunks" were taken into account (***"for combat personnel by 1.1.42"*** ).

In order to load 25 armor-piercing shells into each heavy KV tank and another 13 into each T-34 tank, 27 thousand 76-mm BR shells were required (counting only in the western districts); exactly one-fifth of the available shell resource. It would seem that what problems could

arise in the execution of the order of the marshal and deputy people's commissar of defense? Alas, to cope with the Soviet "human factor" turned out to be impossible.

On May 16, 1941, the same Marshal Kulik sent the following telegram to Minsk, the chief of artillery of the Western OVO: ***"I propose immediately, by operational transport, outside the usual transportation plan, to send armor-piercing shots to the troops, first of all to tank divisions ."*** A month and four more days have passed. On June 20, at 15.30, Marshal Kulik sends another telegram (numbered 1543) to Minsk: ***"According to the report of one of the commanders of the PTABR (anti-tank artillery brigade), the district does not issue artillery rounds to the brigade. I propose to immediately issue ammunition to all PTABRs, including the required armor-piercing rounds. Telegraph on June 21 your order and explanation of the reason for the unacceptable delay in the release of ammunition. [36]"*** War broke out two days later. It has already become telegraph about the reasons

late...

### **Fortified areas**

There is a certain set of "facts" in quotation marks that are known in our country to anyone who is at least minimally interested in the history of the Great Patriotic War. One rifle for three, plywood Soviet fighters, hopelessly obsolete tanks ... In the same row is the legend of how, on the eve of the war, the line of fortifications along the "old border" was blown up, and they did not manage to build anything worthwhile near the new border. As befits any myth, these tales meet some important psychological need of society, in this case, they provide an explanation of the causes of the terrible military disaster in the summer of 1941 that is not burdensome for the national pride of the Great Russians. Like any myth, this one lives by itself, without requiring documentary evidence. and not weakening in the slightest from meeting the real facts. And yet the story about "they blew it up there, they didn't build it here" has a certain fundamental difference from other, obviously false fabrications similar to it. The number of rifles and anti-tank guns in the

Red Army is a kind of abstraction; it is impossible to touch this number with your hand; the reader is forced to either believe what venerable scientists tell on the screen of state television, or spend their own money and legal vacation on a trip and work in the archives of the capital (which no normal person would do). But "unbuilt bunkers" exist in kind. Yes, the Germans blew them up, the Soviets blew them up, they tried to demolish them in the 40s and 50s, but so many were built and so

firmly that there are a lot of surviving pillboxes to this day. You can see them with your eyes, touch them with your hands, go inside. Both in our country and in Poland (most of the fortified areas of the Western OVO after the end of the war remained on the territory returned to Poland), there are numerous associations of "search engines" that have climbed almost every pillbox; there are specialized Internet sites that contain hundreds, if not thousands, of photographs. But the myth lives on  
life...

The words "fortified area" in the Soviet military language denoted two concepts: this is an area of \u200b\u200bthe terrain equipped with a system of defensive structures, the main of which are reinforced concrete long-term firing points (bunkers), and a military unit that occupies these structures and fights in them. The structures are defensive, the military units of the fortified area occupy the defense and conduct a defensive battle, but these facts have nothing to do with the choice of a defensive or offensive strategy. Just as anti-tank guns and anti-aircraft weapons (anti-aircraft machine guns and cannons) are absolutely necessary for an advancing army, so fortified areas play their important role in the course of an offensive operation. What was directly and clearly stated in the Field Manual of the Red Army: ***"By fettering the enemy along their entire front, they create the possibility of concentrating large forces and means to deliver crushing blows to the enemy in other directions"*** (PU-39, Chapter 2, p. 33) .

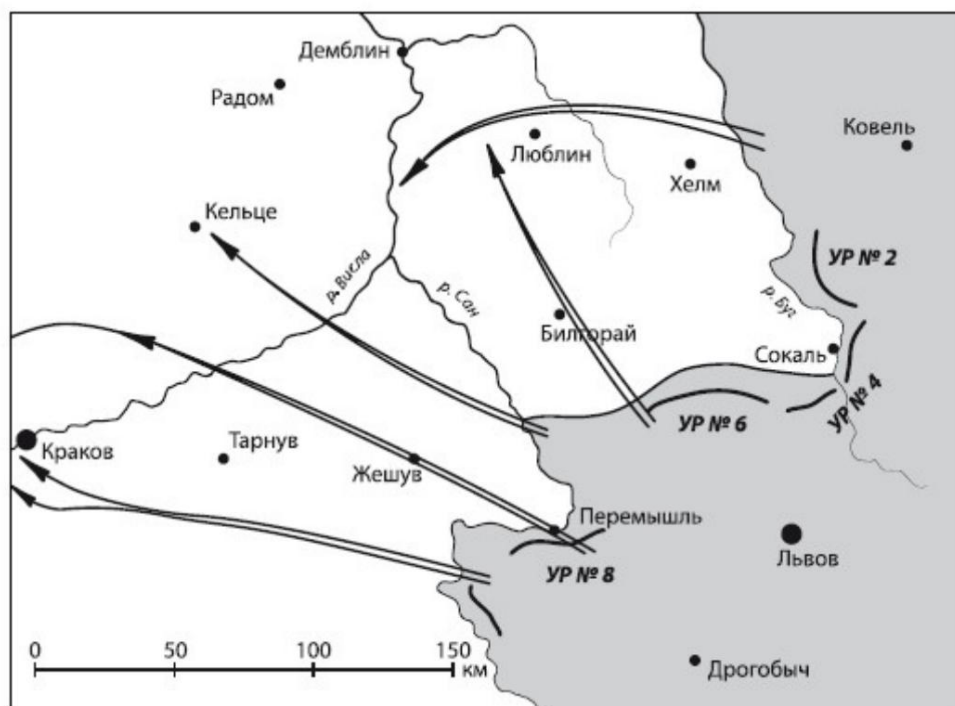
The basis of the foundations of military affairs is the principle of concentration. ***"It is impossible to be equally strong everywhere,"*** paragraph 11 of the Field Manual mentioned above asserts with harsh military brevity. ***"The overwhelming majority of forces and means should be used in an offensive battle in the direction of the main attack."*** It's easy to say, harder to do. By concentrating most of our forces in a narrow offensive zone, we inevitably weaken vast neighboring sectors. And if the enemy is not a coward and not a fool - namely, in the event of a meeting with such an enemy, combat regulations are being developed - then he will try to launch a counterattack on a weakened sector of our front. It is in this situation that the role and importance of the fortified area

can hardly be overestimated. A schematic map compiled on the basis of a real map signed on April 6, 1941 by the Deputy Chief of the Operational Directorate of the General Staff, Major General Anisov (TsAMO. F. 16. Op. 2951. D. 244), shows how this theory was planned to be put into practice . (Fig. 1.) It is clearly seen how a dangerous gap between the flanks of the two



shock groups of the Southwestern Front (5th Army advancing along the Kovel, Chelm, Lublin lines, and 6th Army advancing along the Lvov, Bilgorai, Lublin lines) close three fortified areas: Vladimir-Volynsky (UR No. 2), Strumilovsky (UR No. 4) and Rava-Russian (UR No. 6). On the northern "point" of the "Lvov ledge" the main strike force of the front is being deployed, there are no fortified areas there. The southern flank of the strike force is covered by

the Peremyshl fortified area (UR No. 8). Further south, in the upper reaches of the river. San, the border runs along the ridges of the Carpathian Mountains, impassable for large masses of troops. To the north of Kovel, the territory of the Kiev OVO is naturally covered by an impenetrable massif of swampy forest (Ukrainian Polesie), however, it was decided to strengthen this section with the fortifications of the Kovel UR, but its construction had just begun by June 41st.



Rice. 1. Fortified districts of the Kyiv OVO

The diagram clearly shows another significant feature of the fortified areas of the 20th century - unlike the Great Wall of China, they were not at all stretched into a single inseparable line. URs cover only a small part of the total length of the border. And if we move from a simplified scheme to a military topographic map, it will become clear that even inside the fortified area there is nothing resembling a continuous chain of pillboxes. Defensive structures are concentrated in several groups, quite aptly called "defense nodes". At each such node

10 or more bunkers each (in the Rava-Russian UR there were defense units with 17 bunkers, as part of the Brest UR near the village of Semyatyche there was a defense unit with 20 bunkers). Ultimately, each defense node became a kind of medieval fortress, only its "walls" were not made of stone, but of lead - you cannot approach any of the pillboxes without being under a barrage of fire from its neighbors.

These "fortresses" were built in the same place where fortresses were built in ancient times - near roads, bridges and crossings. The armies of the era of the 2nd MV, as never before or later, were tied to the roads - they already needed to transport a huge amount of heavy materiel (primarily artillery and ammunition) and had not yet moved to all-terrain tracked transporters and helicopters. Powerful defense units of URs "locked" the main transport arteries [19], which inevitably stopped the advance of the entire enemy army; off the roads, along mountain passes and forest paths, a group of reconnaissance saboteurs could pass, but not a Wehrmacht division. In the Rava-Rusky

UR, it was planned to build 13 such fortress nodes on the 90 km front, in the Brest UR - 10. And this is still very modest. On the right (northern) flank of the Western OVO, in the zone of the proposed defense (the shock group of the front, concentrating on its left flank, was supposed to attack Warsaw and Lublin), the Osovets UR was built (22 defense knots with 27 bunkers on average in each of them) and Grodno SD (28 knots, 606 bunkers). [37] On the territory of Lithuania, as part of four URs

(Talshiai, Siauliai, Kaunas, Alytus), it was planned to build 1641 bunkers - eight (!) times more than it was on the famous "Mannerheim Line". In total, the system of fortified areas along the new border from the Baltic to the Black Sea should have consisted of about 5 thousand bunkers (in various sources, figures from 4737 to 5807 are given, this variation is explained by the fact that the construction program was constantly expanding, decisions were made to create more and more fortified areas).

In April 1941, with the onset of spring heat, work on the construction of URs moved into the stage of a round-the-clock construction emergency. In addition to the actual construction units and the prisoners inevitable in such a case, tens of thousands of local residents were involved in the construction; then this seemed not enough, and several rifle battalions from each division of the district were sent to the construction site. Formidable telegrams flew from Moscow one after another, whipping up the already frantic pace of construction (for example, in the Western OVO, in two months in the spring of 41, 217 defensive structures were concreted, which amounted to 128% of

original plan). Judging by the available documents (TsAMO. F. 48. Op. 3408. D. 19–21, outgoing telegrams from the General Staff), in the last days of peace, the top military leadership performed the functions of the directorate of a huge construction trust; the main topic of the correspondence was cement, rebar, the percentage of the plan being fulfilled ...

How many bunkers did you have time to build near the new border? No one knows the exact answer to this question (in particular, also because many structures were actually built, but not accepted by the customer according to the act, and the last pre-war reports are dated, as a rule, on June 1). In this case, there are many answers. The most "wrong" (i.e., recognizing a huge number of built structures) answer is given in his famous book "Memoirs and Reflections" by Marshal Zhukov: "By the **beginning of the war, about 2,500 reinforced concrete structures were built, of which 1,000 were armed with UR artillery, and the rest 1500 - only with machine guns.** [39] Zhukov's memoirs are one of the most widely read books on the history of the Great Patriotic War; many of those who believe in the spell "they didn't manage to build anything on the new border" read these words (at least they saw them with their eyes). However, what can be demanded from the general public, if other doctors of historical sciences literally in the next paragraphs of one article cite Zhukovsky's 2.5 thousand bunkers, and figures known to specialists, three times smaller. [40]

Modest estimates are as follows: in three districts (Baltic, Western and Kiev) more than 800 bunkers were built, of which about 550 were equipped with weapons and special systems. In my opinion, the report prepared in February 1942 by the headquarters of the Supreme Command of the Ground Forces should be considered the most reliable Germany: after many months of studying the occupied territory, the Germans found 1113 bunkers on the "Molotov line" near the new border (this is where "they did not have time to build anything") and 3096 bunkers on the "Stalin line" (this is where "everything was blown up"). [41]

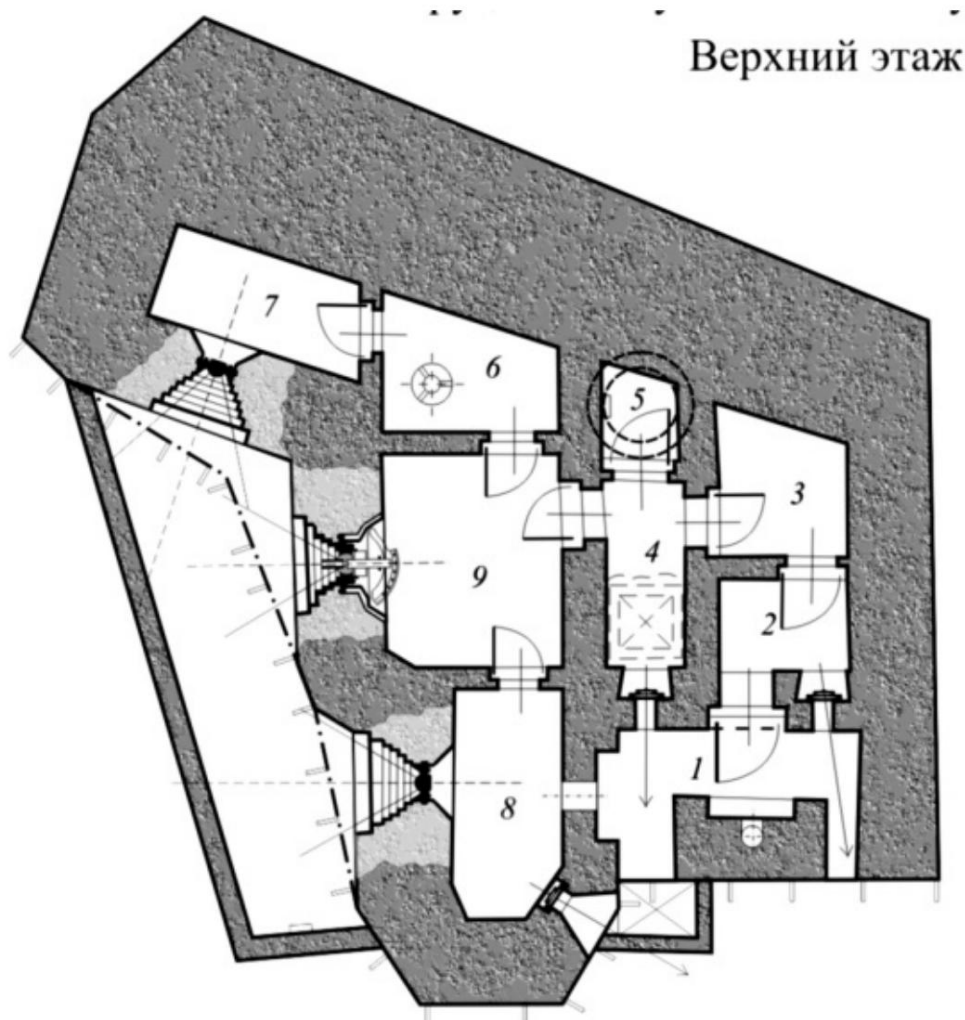
Thousand on the new frontier. Three thousand on the old one. Is it a lot? Everything is relative. The Mannerheim Line included about 200 bunkers. Five times less than on the Molotov Line. However, this difference in numbers does not even to a small extent reflect the main thing - the fundamental difference in the technical level of the Finnish and new Soviet fortifications.

"The generals are preparing for the last war." This aphorism fits perfectly with how the Mannerheim Line was built. In the first half of the 1920s, 120 bunkers were built. Each was a squat reinforced concrete shed with a hole in the wall. From

the barrel of an easel machine gun stuck out through the holes (there were not even the simplest armored shutters in the embrasures). The removal of gunpowder burning was supposed to be a natural draft, through an embrasure hole and a grate in the front door. From the extreme poverty of the young Finnish republic, bunkers were built from concrete grade 350–450 (Soviet standards required the use of concrete grade 750 and higher in fortifications) and with “flexible reinforcement”, i.e., instead of strong rod reinforcement, wire was used; as a result, during the battles to break through the Mannerheim Line, some pillboxes were destroyed by shells from divisional 152-mm howitzers. More than half of all pillboxes of the Mannerheim Line were of such a “barn-cave” level. And even this was then considered a sufficient barrier capable of stopping the advance of the enemy's infantry and cavalry. Finnish pillboxes of

the second stage of construction were much better: normal concrete, 2-3 machine guns, shutters on embrasures, and even such a miracle of technology as a manually operated ventilation unit. Finally, in 1937-1939. Several large forts (the so-called “millionaire pillboxes”) were built (different sources give different numbers - from 5 to 8), each of which housed several machine guns and 1-2 cannons. The Soviet bunkers of the “Stalin line” were of approximately the same (or slightly better) level, the difference was only in quantity: for example, 363 bunkers were included in the Letichevsky UR, and 455 in the Korostensky UR. The practice of hostilities in the first year of World War II showed that that such

bunkers can be quickly put out of action by artillery, tanks and aircraft of the advancing. The lesson went well. The fortified areas along the new border of the USSR, the construction of which began in the summer of 1940, were created on a completely different technical basis; Pillboxes of the new generation were similar to their predecessors, as a modern heavy truck is similar to a village cart. (Fig. 2.)



Rice. 2. Typical bunker "Molotov line"

A large, complex structure with one (sometimes two) underground floors. Walls and floors with a thickness of two or more meters of high-strength reinforced concrete withstood (and this was actually confirmed in June 41st) single hits of concrete-piercing shells of a 210-mm howitzer. T. n. the "floor" (facing the battlefield) wall is blank, without a single hole, the embrasures of the flank fire are located on the side walls of the pillbox; they are not visible to the attackers and cannot be destroyed by long-range artillery fire. Cast armored boxes are embedded in the embrasures, which can withstand a direct hit by an anti-tank gun projectile; inside the box, in a hermetically sealed ball mount, a 45-mm cannon coaxial with a machine gun, or a 76-mm tank gun. As a rule, there was one gun and two machine gun installations in the pillbox (although there were structures with 5-6 embrasures). Periscopes, filter-ventilation installations, radio and telephone communications, underground shelters for the garrison. That was

a fully equipped bunker of the "Molotov line", but even without most of the special equipment, even at the stage of the completed construction of a concrete bunker, it provided the garrison with better protection than a typical bunker of the "Mannerheim line". Now let's listen to those

who had to storm these fortresses. Here is how the Germans describe the defensive structures of the southern sector of the Przemyśl fortified area: ***"DOTs are very advantageously located on the ground and completely dominate the Salyuzh-Sanok road and the lowland that lies in front of it up to the river. San... Concrete coating reaches two meters, the walls are approximately the same thickness. The bunkers are closed from the outside by one or more lattice doors, thus it was possible to protect them from being torn off by a blast wave. Behind them there are several more steel doors that lead to the interior. Some of the bunkers are armed with two 76-mm guns, some with several heavy machine guns. Anti-tank guns and rapid-firing machine guns are placed behind thick steel embrasures, unusually resistant to shelling. Guidance of guns is carried out with the help of an aiming device that ensures the safety of gunners in the event of shelling of the enemy*** (we are talking about the use of periscopes. - *M.S.* ) .. ***In front of cannons or machine-gun embrasures, there is a ditch 1.5 meters fenced with a concrete fence, which makes it impossible to silence or undermine the embrasure, at least it is very difficult to do this ... "[42]*** And here are the recollections of one of those who saw the Germans storming the Przemyśl UR through the aperture of the sight. Junior Sergeant Molchanov Ivan Ivanovich says: ***"It was a powerful fortification, armed with 4 embrasures, there were two 76-mm cannons***

***and 2 Degtyarev machine guns ... At the briefing, we were told by the commander that they should not just occupy it, but sit on the defensive 6 months without leaving. Either until we are blown up together with a bunker, or there should have been enough food and ammunition for six months. The pillbox was two-story, healthy, reinforced concrete walls 3.5 meters thick*** (this is most likely an exaggeration. - *M.S.* ) . ***While we occupied it, the German meanwhile captured our side of Przemyśl; then he opened heavy fire on the bunker, but the shells flew off from the bunker like peas from the wall ... "*** Contrary to the widespread (that is, intensely spread) misconception, the bunkers of the "Molotov Line" were not placed two steps from the border, "as a result of which the Germans were able to capture them in the very first hours of the invasion." To begin with, we recall that Zambruvsky, Brest, Vladimir-Volynsky, Strumilovsky, part of Rava-Russian and

e.

The Przemyśl fortified areas were located along the banks of the border rivers (Bug, Solokiya, San), and the Wehrmacht assault groups could not "step over" these rivers, and even with guns, flamethrowers and explosive charges, with all their desire. Secondly, in reality, between the border and the defense nodes of the URs, the so-called. "forefield strip" several kilometers deep. In his textbook well-known to specialists, Vladimírsky (at the time of the outbreak of the war he was deputy chief of the operational department of the headquarters of the 5th Army of the South-Western Front) states without much emotion : ***ten battalion field-type districts built along the right bank of the Bug. Readiness: 80-90 percent*** . [43] The word "also" here refers to the previous description of the foreground zone of the Kovelsky fortified area [20], where, according to the same

Vladimírsky, "in each ***battalion area in the supply lines of the fortified areas, 130–135 field-type defensive structures were built, mainly bunkers*** (wood-and-earth firing point. - *M.S.* ) ***and trenches, and several bunkers each. Among the structures of each [battalion] area there were: 3–4 reinforced concrete casemates for 45-mm cannons and heavy machine guns, 6–9 bunkers of semi-caponiers for machine guns, 6 anti-fragmentation machine-gun nests, 12–15 hiding firing points (SOT), 6 anti-fragmentation trenches for 45-mm and 76-mm guns...***" Sheer little things. Nothing has been built...

Of course, everything that is built by some people can be broken by other people. There are no fortresses that cannot be taken by storm or siege. The bunkers of the "Molotov Line" did not pose any fundamentally insoluble task to the advancing Germans, the only question was the cost of resources, including an absolutely irreplaceable resource - time. Here, a lot of resources had to be spent on the destruction of thousands of bunkers. In order to fill the word "many" with concrete content, let's turn to the history of the breakthrough by the Red Army of the incomparably weaker "Mannerheim Line". The

general chronology of events is well known. It took 7–10 days to overcome the 30–40 km of the "foreground" and reach the main line of fortifications, then two weeks of fruitless and bloody attempts to break through. After that, a month and a half of operational pause. On February 11, 1940, the offensive began, which in early March ended with the final breakthrough of the Finnish fortified area and the Red Army's exit to Vyborg.

To achieve such a result, the troops of the North-Western Front deployed on the Karelian Isthmus included 13 regiments and 4 artillery battalions of large and special power (these are not epithets, but terms); by the beginning of March, the front had 7 thousand guns and mortars, more than 3 thousand tanks. The advancing group used up 46,000 rounds for the 203-mm howitzer and 6,000 rounds for special power artillery systems; in total (that is, not only on the Karelian Isthmus), 79.7 kilotons (!) of artillery ammunition were used up during the three months of the war. Of course, this was not enough, and aviation added another 22.6 kilotons of bombs, including 12,890 FAB-250s and 1,677 FAB-500s. [44]

Having worked with the calculator, we will find out that on average 260 shells of heavy howitzers (caliber 203 mm and more) were spent on one pillbox of the Mannerheim Line. According to the most conservative estimate (assuming that half of the heavy high-explosive bombs were used to bomb Finnish cities, which is a clear exaggeration), 36 large-caliber bombs were dropped on each pillbox. Against this background, about 104 thousand FAB-100 bombs, 1.8 million shells for 122-mm and 152-mm howitzers, as well as 127 million rifle cartridges used up during the "winter war", you can not remember.

With such a consumption of material resources, the breakthrough of the Mannerheim Line took a month, and the losses of the personnel of the North-Western Front amounted to 40 thousand killed and 150 thousand wounded (about half of the total losses of the Red Army in the

Finnish war). [45] The Northwestern Front was then commanded by the commander of the 1st rank (future marshal) S.K. Timoshenko. In May 1940 he became People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR. One of the two armies of the Northwestern Front was commanded by K.A. Meretskov, who became General of the Army and Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army after the "Winter War". It was these two people on the eve of the Great War who were responsible for developing the most important strategic plans of the Red Army. And for them, the above figures were not signs on paper - this knowledge was given to them in the most distinct sensations. With their own eyes they saw piles of corpses of Red Army soldiers on the outskirts of the Finnish pillboxes, with their own ears they heard the terrible roar of artillery cannonade. Is it any wonder that they expected something comparable from the

incomparably more powerful "Molotov line"? **Tank Troops** One cannot win a war by fortified areas, by defense alone. The Charter of the Red Army formulated this idea without a shadow of a doubt: ***"Only a decisive offensive in the main direction, culminating in encirclement and relentless pursuit, leads to co***



***destruction of enemy forces and means. Offensive combat is the main type of action of the Red Army ” (PU-39, p. 10).*** For land armies of the middle of the 20th century, tank troops became the main tool for conducting offensive combat, pursuing and encircling the

enemy. No country in the world has made such great efforts - and has not achieved such great success - in the creation of this shock component of the armed forces, as the Soviet Union. None of the major military powers of the world had such obstacles and difficulties in creating armored forces as Germany had, which, under the terms of the Versailles Peace Treaty, was completely forbidden to produce tanks or purchase them abroad. At that time (early 1930s), when serial production of tanks was already launched in the Soviet Union and the world's first large armored formations were created, the German Reichswehr conducted field exercises with cardboard mock-ups of non-existent tanks. With what results in the creation of tank troops did the opponents approach June 1941?

The elementary particle that makes up tank troops (but to which their entire content is by no means reduced!), is an armored tracked vehicle, a tank. At the initial stage of the Second World War, it was a very poor (compared to what appeared only 3-4 years later) car: no strong armor, no fire comparable to the fire of divisional or at least regimental artillery, no real ability to move off the roads. ***"They were poorly maneuverable and vulnerable to artillery fire, they ran on gasoline and, therefore, were highly flammable, had insufficiently strong armor."*** Absolutely correct, realistic and sober assessment. It is impossible to disagree with the Marshal of Victory in this case. True, with one important clarification: Zhukov wrote this about Soviet tanks, forgetting to add that the German ones were much worse.

In the Polish campaign (September 1939), the most massive "tank" of the Wehrmacht was the Pz-I. This is a combat training 5-ton tankette, armed with two rifle-caliber machine guns; it was put into production in the first years after Hitler came to power as a replacement for cardboard mock-ups, with which the cadres of future German tank forces were previously prepared. In May 1940, the 9-ton Pz-II became the most massive tank in the combat units of the Wehrmacht (the 10 tank divisions that then defeated France and its allies included 880 tanks of this type); the second largest was the same wretched tankette Pz-I (643 units).

In terms of armor, the "deuce" was quite consistent with the Soviet T-26, the same thin (14.5 mm) armor, which made its way through any anti-tank gun, and from close range - with an anti-tank rifle or short-barreled regimental guns. The engine is gasoline, according to the authoritative opinion of the marshal - "highly flammable"; narrow tracks, very conditional off-road patency. The most important thing is surprisingly weak weapons. The Pz-II was armed with a 20 mm automatic "cannon" (remarkably, in Soviet documents of the first weeks of the war, this tank is usually described as a "light tank with a heavy machine gun"). 20 mm is a typical caliber for aircraft guns, and in order to pierce a thin duralumin sheet of an enemy aircraft, this caliber was enough. In the Soviet Union of the 1930s, it never occurred to anyone to arm tanks or heavy armored vehicles in this way; the high-explosive fragmentation effect of a 20-mm projectile (weight 90–130 g) is negligible; it was capable of hitting something only with a direct hit. ***“Germany entered World War II with a ridiculous amount of bad tanks” (V. Suvorov).*** You better not say. It was with such tanks that the Wehrmacht completely defeated the French army (not the weakest in Europe) and

its allies in a few weeks. How did this become possible? The answer to this question is well known. It is very important to emphasize that he was known long before Hitler's "blitzkrieg"; this answer is recorded in all combat regulations, it was obliged to memorize a graduate of short-term 6-month courses for junior commanders.

The concentration of forces and the interaction of military branches. Old as the world, not canceled by any miracles of technology, the fundamental principles of military affairs. The Germans wisely used their "funny number of bad tanks.

At the level of strategy, the Germans showed their commitment to the idea of concentration of forces by the fact that out of the 156 divisions they had, 136 were put up for the war with France and its allies. In the vast expanses of Denmark, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Germany proper, only 13 divisions were left (another 7 divisions fought in Norway). At the operational level, the principle of concentration of forces was implemented with the same unswerving determination: in the zone of the main attack, on a front of 130 km from Liege to Sedan, 7 panzer divisions out of 10 and 5 motorized divisions out of 5 were concentrated. breakthrough, another 2 tank divisions were transferred from Belgium. At the level of tactics (combat), the Wehrmacht tank division (and in May 1940 in it

there were about 270 tanks) attacked on a front section only a few kilometers wide, i.e., in the defense zone of an enemy infantry regiment.

On such a front, the French could have one anti-tank battery, at best, a division. At the moment of a tank attack on the position of an anti-tank division (12-18 guns, the crews of which are protected only by a tunic), a flurry of fire fell - yes, very weak 20-mm guns, but in the amount of two hundred, and then the guns and crews were pressed into the ground by "light tanks", i.e., 10-ton steel colossus ... Even if the commander and personnel of the division show suicidal courage and high military skill, they will have time to knock out one or two dozen tanks (the armor of the tanks is almost "cardboard"), but not they have no chance to stop the tank division. However, losing dozens of expensive tanks is not at all necessary. The attackers have one more "trump card" in their hands - interaction. The anti-

tank artillery of the defenders can and should be suppressed even before the start of the tank attack. The term "suppress" in artillery has a very specific meaning: to force the crew of an enemy gun to stop firing and go into cover (the physical destruction of materiel and personnel is already a "super task"). A tank attack is always fleeting - even a Pz-II barely crawling over wet arable land takes 5 minutes to overcome the last kilometer separating it from the firing position of an anti-tank division. Accordingly, it is enough to suppress enemy anti-tank artillery for a very short time.

Of course, before firing, camouflaged enemy guns must be detected, and this requires reconnaissance. Reconnaissance data must be transferred to the gunners - for which a reliable working connection is needed. To organize interaction, a competent and energetic commander is needed - the most important "detail" of the military machine. If all of the above is available and working, then a tank division, even armed with weak light tanks, will pass through the defenses of an enemy infantry regiment as

knife through butter.

And after that, after the tanks had broken through the first line of defense, the most important thing began. The result of the tactical success of a panzer division can be all or nothing. It is from the documentary description of this "all or nothing" that the next chapters of our book will consist. I can immediately announce its summary: in the summer of 1941, even in those rare, rare cases when the tank divisions and corps of the Red Army achieved local success, it ended with "nothing". Not once, at any point of the front, was it possible to develop a tactical breakthrough into an operational one. The Germans coolly brought up anti-tank and anti-aircraft

artillery, aviation was called in, and all the "improvised means" were used - from heavy howitzers to bundles of grenades. Ultimately, after one or two days, the offensive of the Soviet tank units, which had lost all control, ended in their complete defeat.

On the contrary, almost always the very first success of German tank formations led to the collapse of the entire enemy defense system. Attacked troops with dizzying speed turned into an armed crowd, which crowd took to flight. But running away from a tank, even the slowest one, is difficult. Roads and bridges have by no means infinite capacity, and confusion and panic also reduce this capacity many times over. And then the Germans began to interact at the next level - aviation came into action. Crowds of people cluttering roads, huddled at bridges and crossings, were an ideal target for bombing; chaos and confusion passed into the stage of collective madness, the crowds threw down their weapons and scattered in all directions. After that, the attackers were only required to urge the fleeing; any tank successfully coped with such a task, its performance characteristics were no longer significant.

This is exactly what happened in May-June 1940 in France. The same thing, but on a much larger scale, happened in 1941 on the Eastern (for the Germans) Front. Then it happened again in the summer of 1942. And then something changed. The Red Army stopped running away - and the "tank wedges" of the Wehrmacht immediately jammed. The performance characteristics of German tanks have radically improved, the troops have already forgotten about the wretched Pz-I, Pz-II, Pz-38 (t), the mighty Tigers and Panthers rolled onto the battlefields, but not a single swift tank throw - like those, which the Germans carried out over and over again in the first year of the war - in the 43rd, 44th years it was not possible to carry out. Yes, there were episodes of successful battles, even successful operations carried out by German tank formations, but in the end they ended in "nothing" - except for the result of huge losses of tanks.

General conclusion: the presence of a large number of excellent tanks is desirable, but by no means a necessary condition for the effective operations of tank troops. **They fight with what they have.** If wretched tanks are combined with a very high-quality "human factor", and even add complete disorganization on the enemy's side, then huge operational successes can be achieved even with "cardboard tanks".

That's the theory. Now let's turn to practice. The practice of military operations in the first weeks of the Soviet-German war was reflected

in the reports of the commanders of tank units and formations of the Red Army. A lot of these reports have been preserved in the archives. When reading them, it is advisable not to forget about who, where and when they wrote them. For the most part, the documents below were drawn up in the first days of August 1941. They were signed by the commanders of the regiments, divisions and mechanized corps that were completely defeated; many of them wrote these reports, having left the encirclement, having lost all materiel and up to 90% of their personnel. These people did not yet know whether they would be forgiven for the results of such a wonderful leadership of the troops or "put them up against the wall." It would seem that they should not be told about the mighty, invincible German tanks, about the multiple numerical superiority of the enemy, about outdated and unreliable own tanks, and so on - according to the entire list of "objective reasons" successfully composed by two generations of Soviet historians. But the commanders of the 41st year are talking about something c

24th Panzer Division (10th MK, Northern, then Northwestern Front) ***"Enemy***

***motorized units operate only along roads, boldly go deep into the rear and are located mainly in settlements ... Thus, the enemy is tied to roads, the quality of which determines speed his movements ... The actions of the enemy's motorized mechanized units reach complete impudence, when [our troops] withdraw , they look for the flanks of the weakest in composition. If an attack on the move fails, it immediately switches to artillery preparation, when tanks appear, the KV concentrates all means against them ... "*** [46]

11th Mechanized Corps (Western

Front) ***"In the very first attacks of our tanks, the enemy suffered heavy losses in tanks, and in subsequent battles, when our tanks appeared, he left behind his defending infantry ... The offensive [of the enemy] is being prepared by aviation, by bombing and shelling from machine guns. After that, artillery preparation and shelling from mortars is carried out for 2–3 hours, then tanks move at a distance of 300–500 meters ahead of the infantry. Tanks do not participate in the attack on the crossed and forested area. When attacking in the depths of the defense, tanks do not break away far from the infantry, and only when the defenders (in the original - "defense") begin a quick retreat - wedged into the retreating and pursue them ... "*** [47] 7th Panzer

Division (6 MK, Western Front ) ***"The Germans***

***use tanks mainly in small units: a platoon, a company, a battalion in cooperation with other branches of the armed forces (motorized infantry and cavalry) ... When our tanks appeared, the enemy's tanks did not accept the battle, but hastily retreated. The anti-tank defense system of the Germans is developed, and it should be noted that,***

***in addition to 37-mm anti-tank guns, all large-caliber semi-automatic artillery is widely used ... He personally overcame four anti-tank areas with KV and T-34 vehicles. In one car, the driver's hatch cover was knocked out, and in the other, the TPD apple. It should be noted that it is mainly guns and machine guns that are disabled, otherwise the T-34 machine perfectly withstands the blows of 37-mm guns, not to mention the KV. [48]***

114th Tank Regiment (separate 57th Tank Division, South-Western, then Western

Front) ***“In the direction of the regiment, the enemy used up to one battalion of light tanks, up to a company of medium tanks. In addition, the enemy used tankettes and armored vehicles. During not one of our tank attacks did the enemy tanks engage in battle with our tanks, they acted either on the flanks of their units or went to the flanks of our units, but in the event of our tanks withdrawing, the enemy tanks press on the tail and pursue. Most of all, enemy tanks were used in small groups to reach the flank and rear of our units, as well as in pursuit ... There was a case of a frontal attack by enemy medium tanks, but as soon as two enemy tanks were disabled, the entire battle formation returned back and after a while appeared with another direction...***

***Conclusion: Enemy tanks, as a rule, are a means of breaking through and demoralizing the rear and flanks (highlighted by me. - M.S. ), hence our units should not forget about the organization of anti-tank defense anywhere. In all cases, our tanks, armed with cannons, can be used as anti-tank***

***guns (T-26 tanks)...” [49]*** 17th Tank Division

(5th MK, Western Front) ***“For the entire period of fighting from 7.7 to 5.8.1941. units of the 17th division carried out (inaudible - 1, 4 or 7) tank attacks on enemy tanks. Once they were attacked by enemy tanks in the amount of 60 tanks. In all cases, the enemy avoided attacks, always evading equal forces and even smaller ones. In the course of the battles that lasted a month, it was established: good interaction of [enemy]***

***units , especially ground troops with aviation, good work of***

***communications services. Especially widely the enemy uses light-signal communica***

8th Panzer Division (4th MK, Southwestern Front)

***“Enemy tanks operating in the Staro-Konstantinov region and other areas have the following characteristics. Medium tank: armament - one short-barreled 75-mm cannon, two machine guns (according to the description - Pz-IV, which in most other reports is called***

"heavy". — *M.S. ) ... Armor up to 25 mm. Undercarriage: the caterpillar is narrow, the rollers and balancers are weak. The tank's cross-country ability is*

*weak, it doesn't work off-road ... Enemy tanks, [even] having superior numbers against our tanks, as a rule, do not go on the attack, only one case in the Staro-Konstantinov region, [when] they went on the attack before the tank battalion, of which 22 were destroyed by our tanks, the rest withdrew without accepting the battle. The offensive of tanks and infantry is usually preceded by a long artillery preparation and heavy mortar fire over a large area. The offensive is organized with the close cooperation of all branches of the armed forces. Aviation appears very quickly on call ... "* [51] 37th Panzer

Division (15th MK, South-Western Front) *" In the battles it was established that with the resistance of our troops (highlighted by me. - M.S. ) , the advancing enemy units retreated or bypassed areas of resistance. It should be noted that in the event of the withdrawal of our units, the enemy organized the pursuit and sought to go along parallel roads to the*

*The enemy tanks did not engage in battle with our tanks and did not accept attacks, but sought to frustrate our tank attacks from a place. The armor protection of [German] tanks is insufficient and penetrates not only with an armor-piercing projectile of a 45-mm cannon, but also with a fragmentation projectile ... Enemy tanks have weak armor protection and are used in limited numbers, most likely due to the economy of the tanks themselves, as well as fuel. In contrast to the means of fighting the enemy, our tank and artillery means of fighting are superior [them] and are perfect (strong armor protection, high fire power and mobility) ... "* [52]

32nd Panzer Division (4th MK, Southwestern Front)

*"The armor of our tanks [of new types] cannot be penetrated by German 37-mm cannons; there were cases when the KV tank had up to 100 hits, but the armor was not pierced. Tanks T-26, BT-7 and armored vehicles (light and heavy) are penetrated by both heavy machine guns and 37-mm enemy cannons. The fire of our tanks from the first two or three shots destroyed enemy tanks. Very often, enemy tanks ignite from the fire of our 76-mm tank guns ... "* [53] Report on

the combat operations of the 104th Panzer Division from July 21 to 30 (Western Front)

*"Tanks KV and T-34 on leaving the battlefield have a large number traces of the impact of armor-piercing shells. No penetrating effect of the projectile on the armor was found on these vehicles. Combat and technical*

***the properties of the KV and T-34 tanks, revealed during the battle, are highly appreciated by the division command ... Movement on the march of the T-34 and especially the KV is slow due to the unpreparedness of difficult sections of the path. These tanks must be accompanied by sappers or trained infantry ... " [54]***

Report of the Assistant Chief of Staff of the GABTU Major Sirotin "Actions of the tank units of the German army. According to the experience of the battles of tank formations of the Red Army from 22.6 to 1.9.41.

***"The armor of all German tanks resists only small arms and is pierced by shells from our anti-tank artillery. When the armor of the engine compartments is pierced by shells and bullets from heavy machine guns, all German tanks are on fire.***

***The air intakes are located on top of the tank hull above the engine compartment. A ventilation hatch is located in the roof of the tower of German tanks. A burning liquid from a bottle thrown on the roof or engine compartment will freely penetrate into the tank. Recently, small metal meshes have been placed on the air ducts to protect against flames ... Our anti-tank and tank artillery, sniper fire on viewing slots and hatches, anti-tank mines and grenades, bottles of flammable liquid are effective means of fighting German tanks ... "[55 ]***

Yes, such a coincidence - not only meaningful, but almost verbatim - of reports written by different commanders independently of each other, will seem suspicious to the vigilant reader. Has the treacherous author hidden other reports from readers, with different assessments? I understand these fears. How to help - I do not know. Show

I can't tell the reader "all documents" - all documents occupy several multi-storey buildings in the archive repository. It remains just to wait until young historians of the correct ideological orientation, who do not have minimal engineering knowledge, but tweet so smartly about "cemented chromium-molybdenum armor", present other documents to the public, with other assessments and conclusions ...

Did the command of the Red Army know about the need to concentrate forces and the interaction of military branches? The question is ernistic, one can say frankly - a stupid question, but we even have to discuss it, because the gullible public on every corner is told about some kind of "blitzkrieg technology", about some kind of hidden knowledge that was revealed to the Germans "based on the experience of two years of world war" ( By the way, where is the Wehrmacht before June 22, 1941 managed to fight for two years?



French and Balkan campaigns and three months in total is not recruited). So, gentlemen, "blitzkrieg" (lightning war) is not a technology, not a method, not a secret spell. Hitler's blitzkrieg of 1940-1941 is the result. Consequence, not cause. The result of the impact of many causes, in particular, the competent use of the fundamental principles of operational art by Wehrmacht commanders. These principles were not only known to the command of the Red Army,

but also recorded in combat regulations. In the most categorical terms: ***"The interaction of the branches of the armed forces is the main condition for success in battle ... Only in joint use and joint effort do all types of troops ensure victory ... No actions of troops on the battlefield are possible without the support of artillery and are unacceptable without it ... The use of tanks must be massive ... An attack by tanks of the front line must in all cases be provided with artillery support and is not allowed without it ..."*** Moreover, if the German command, both in theory and in practice, assumed the use of tank

formations at the very beginning of the operation, in the first echelon, to break through the defensive enemy lines, the Soviet military school was much more prudent in this aspect. ***"Tank formations for independent actions are used in conjunction with cavalry, motorized infantry and aviation to develop a breakthrough through a hacked enemy defense gap"*** (highlighted by me. - *M.S.* ) ***and are for the most part a means of high command to achieve a decisive offensive result"*** (PU-39 , item 264). In the course of the well-known December (1940) Conference of the Red Army's senior command staff, this topic - the introduction of tank formations into a gap previously pierced by infantry and artillery - became the subject of the closest consideration. It is noteworthy that General of the Army Pavlov (a tanker, participant in the war in Spain, then head of the GABTU KA), who made the keynote speech on this topic, characterized the German contribution to the theory of the "deep operation" as follows: "The Germans did not invent anything new . ***They took what we had, improved it a bit and applied it."***

Theory is good, but even the most highly educated architect cannot build a house without bricks and builders. Did the command of the tank troops of the Red Army have "bricks" that could be used massively? Was there anything to organize interaction with? The answer to these questions will be even shorter and simpler. It has already been said about artillery above: there were one and a half times individual artillery regiments in the Red Army

more than the Germans - separate divisions. As for the number of tanks, according to this indicator, the Stalinist empire was ahead of the rest. As of

January 1, 1934, the Soviet tank fleet was 7574 vehicles (yes, this figure also includes machine-gun tankettes, but the Germans at that time were practicing with cardboard mock-ups). Three years later, on January 1, 1937, the Red Army already had 17,280 tanks, more than in all European countries combined. On January 1, 1939, the Red Army had 11,600 tanks armed with a 45-mm cannon or a flamethrower (T-26, BT-5, BT-7) and about 550 tanks armed with 76-mm cannon (the so-called "artillery" BT-7A and heavy multi-turreted T-28 and T-35). **[56]** Six times more than it will be at the beginning of the World War (September 1, 1939) in the Wehrmacht - and this is if you include the 1223 Pz-II with its 20-mm "gun" in the category of tanks. A huge amount of armored vehicles, coupled with a clear understanding of the idea of concentration

of forces, made it possible to start creating the world's first large tank formations. In 1930 (Europe then carelessly danced the foxtrot) the 1st separate mechanized brigade was formed. In 1932, this mechanized brigade was turned into a mechanized corps. In the same year, the instruction "Driving independent mechanized formations into battle" was adopted, and by the end of 1935 there were already 4 mechanized corps and 18 tank brigades in the Red Army. The following year, 1936, the number of tank brigades grew to 30 - at that time there were three tank divisions in the Wehrmacht and a fourth was being formed.

The names, structure and combat composition of the motorized formations of the Red Army were continuously updated, tank, rifle and machine gun, motorized armor, motorized brigades were created. In the end, in the summer of 1940, decisions were made to form mechanized corps of the following composition: two tank divisions, one motorized division, a motorcycle regiment, corps units (a communications battalion, an engineering battalion, etc.). Strictly speaking, there were not two, but three "tank" divisions in the mechanized corps, since the Soviet motorized division corresponded in its structure to the German tank division (one tank, one artillery and two infantry regiments), and in terms of the nominal number of tanks (275 units) surpassed her. By December 1, 1940, the formation of nine

mechanized corps and two separate tank divisions was completed - but at the same time, 45 (!) Tank brigades still remained in the Red Army. **[57]** The last point on the path of organizational and structural concentration of armored forces

became adopted in February - March 1941, the decision to disband the tank brigades. Such "small" structures were considered obsolete. Now only large formations (mechanized corps) were to remain in the Red Army, capable of independently solving tasks of an operational scale. It was supposed to deploy 30 (thirty) mechanized corps, 1 thousand tanks and 36 thousand people each.

A million people in tank troops. 100 thousand people directly in tanks - this is more than there were horsemen in the horde of Genghis Khan.

At the end of the 30s, the design and technological groundwork accumulated in the military industry of the USSR made it possible to create new, fundamentally better "bricks" for the construction of tank troops: the T-34 medium tank and the KV heavy tank (both of which were adopted by the Red Army). Army on December 19, 1939). Anti-ballistic armor, powerful armament (a long-barreled 76-mm gun), a diesel engine, wide tracks, high cross-country ability and a large power reserve, together meant the creation of a qualitatively new instrument of warfare. And, alas, I'm not the first to understand. And not Viktor Suvorov. Back in 1954, in the classic work of Müller-Hillebrand, which has become a reference book for every military historian, it was written:

***"At the beginning of the campaign, the Red Army received a new T-34 tank, to which the German ground forces could not oppose either an equivalent tank or an appropriate defensive weapon. The appearance of the T-34 tank was an unpleasant surprise, because, thanks to its speed, high cross-country ability, enhanced armor protection, armament, and mainly the presence of an elongated 76-mm cannon, which has increased shooting accuracy and penetrating ability of projectiles at a long, hitherto unattainable distance, was a completely new type of tank weapon." [33]***

The T-34 and KV in many situations could independently, without the help of field artillery, destroy the enemy's firepower at the forefront, and then support the infantry with powerful fire when breaking through the enemy's defenses to the entire tactical depth. Armed with such tanks, a division could no longer only drive the fleeing, but also overcome the stubborn resistance of the enemy. The heavy KV tank was really capable of operating under a hail of shells from German divisional artillery. Here is one well-documented episode: in early August 1941, a KV tank from the 107th Panzer Division (commander

crew - Lieutenant Kapusta Vasily Dmitrievich) suppressed a battery of enemy anti-tank guns, while receiving 200 direct hits, none of which penetrated the armor. [321] The structure of the tank division, armed

with new types of tanks, was established as follows: two tank regiments of 4 battalions (a battalion of heavy KV tanks, two battalions of medium tanks T-34, a battalion of flamethrower tanks OT-26), an artillery howitzer regiment of 2- divisional composition and a motorized rifle regiment of a typical 3-battalion composition. In addition, the division included a reconnaissance battalion, a communications battalion, an anti-aircraft division, a pontoon-bridge battalion, repair and medical units. The structure of the division clearly shows the desire to ensure its maximum autonomy, the ability to act independently in the operational depth of the enemy's defense, in isolation from the bulk of its troops. The main weapons of the mechanized corps - tanks and armored vehicles - were distributed as

follows (see Table 5):

|               | тд  | тд  | мд  | МК   | нем. тд    |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|------|------------|
| КВ            | 63  | 63  | 0   | 126  | —          |
| Т-34          | 210 | 210 | 0   | 426  | 30 Pz-IV   |
| БТ-7          | 26  | 26  | 258 | 310  | 106 Pz-III |
| Т-26          | 22  | 22  | 0   | 44   | —          |
| ОТ-26         | 54  | 54  | 0   | 108  | 65 Pz-II   |
| Т-37/38/40    | 0   | 0   | 17  | 17   | 8 Pz.Bef   |
| Всего танков: | 375 | 375 | 275 | 1031 | 209        |
| БА-10         | 56  | 56  | 18  | 152  | —          |
| БА-20         | 39  | 39  | 33  | 114  | ?          |

**Table 5**

**Note:** in addition to the armored vehicles that were part of the divisions, tanks and armored vehicles were in service with the corps units and the management

of the mechanized corps. Thus, in total, the mechanized corps of the Red Army (including 40 Komsomolets tracked tractors) should have had 1337 units of armed armored vehicles in the state. 1058 units of armored vehicles (KV, T-34, BT-7, T-26 tanks, BA-10 armored vehicles) were armed with guns of 45 mm or more caliber.

Everything is relative. But for a correct comparison, it is desirable to first decide - what are we comparing with what and why? Above, in a review of the structure and armament of infantry formations, we compared a Red Army rifle division with a Wehrmacht infantry division. This approach has a clear rationale: the infantry (rifle) divisions of both sides were assigned comparable tasks, the general

the number of divisions in the USSR and Germany was comparable (about 200 on one side, 170 on the other), their number in June 1941 at the front was also almost equal (90-100 divisions).

In the case of tank formations, the arithmetic is completely different: 17 Wehrmacht tank divisions against 20 mechanized corps of the Red Army [21], and according to all pre-war plans, the mechanized corps was supposed to be used in an "undivided form", as a single armored formation, which was faced with tasks of precisely that scale, which in the Wehrmacht had to be solved by the forces of a tank division. A comparison of the structure and armament of the pair "German tank division - Soviet mechanized corps" would, in my opinion, be the most honest. But it's too simple and obvious. And without long calculations, it is clear that even a mechanized corps that is only half staffed is superior in all quantitative indicators to a Wehrmacht tank division. Therefore, we will go the traditional way, comparing division with division. The structure of the Wehrmacht tank division changed many times, and only in one direction - towards the reduction of its tank core. Formed at the end of 1935, the first three divisions included two tank regiments, two battalions in each regiment, a total of 561 tanks. By the beginning of the French campaign, the number of tanks in the battalion was reduced to 74 units, in total (taking into account the command of the division) there should have been 316 tanks, but in some divisions (6th, 7th and 8th) there were only three tank battalions. At the stage of preparation for the invasion of the USSR, the number of Wehrmacht tank divisions was doubled (from 10 to 20), but at the same time their structure changed radically - now only one tank regiment remained in the tank division.

There was no single staff structure for a single tank regiment; there were options for both 2- and 3-battalion composition; out of 17 tank divisions concentrated by June 22, 1941 on the Eastern Front, 8 had a tank regiment of 2-battalion composition (an average of 154 tanks per division). Only one, the 17th Panzer Division (2nd Panzer Group, Army Group Center) approached the full 3-battalion staff (it is shown in Table 5). None of the military theorists (with the exception of Ph.D. Isaev) and, more

importantly, practitioners saw nothing good in this forced reduction in the tank core of the division. Probably the most famous and successful practitioner of the Wehrmacht, Heinz Guderian, appointed in 1943 as Inspector General of the German Armored Forces, prepared a detailed report for Hitler, in which he outlined the situation and outlined

necessary steps to improve it. Regarding the structure of the tank division, the following was said:

***“A tank division is considered fully combat-ready when the number of its tanks is in the appropriate proportion to the rest of the combat means and vehicles ... If the number of tanks becomes significantly less than 400, then the service apparatus (the number of people and wheeled vehicles) will not correspond to the true strike force of the division ... It is better to have a few full-fledged divisions instead of a large number of poorly equipped formations. The latter require a disproportionate number of vehicles for equipping, consume a lot of fuel and manpower without the proper effect (highlighted by me. - M.S. ) , make it difficult to manage and supply and create traffic jams on the roads.*** Further, Guderian proposed to return to the pre-war scheme, when there were 4 tank battalions in the tank division. [59] In 1956, the book by E. Middeldorf (during the war years

he was a combat officer, then an assistant on the generalization of tactical experience in the General Staff of the German Ground Forces) “Russian Campaign: Tactics and Armament”, which was now a textbook known to specialists, was published. summed up outcomes are:

***“Although the German armored forces during the last war revolutionized the methods of warfare, their organization was not advanced. Back in 1940, armored vehicles made up only a small part of a tank division. At that time, there were about 3,000 unarmored wheeled vehicles for 300 tanks, unable to move off-road. Instead of strengthening the tank core of the division before the attack on Russia, Hitler insisted on reducing the number of tanks in the division to 200 units. In 1944, an attempt was made to correct this mistake ...***

” In contrast, Middeldorf highly appreciates the organizational structures of the tank forces of the Red Army: ***“ A feature of the organization of Russian armored formations is the presence of a strong tank core ... The Russian tank division, with a personnel strength of 10 thousand people, had in twice as many tanks as the German tank division, which numbered about 15 thousand people.***

[60] It is no coincidence that practitioners so often recall “wheeled vehicles that cannot move off-road”. Of the 17 tank divisions of the Eastern Front, 3 did not have a single

infantry armored personnel carrier at all. Most (12 divisions) had one motorized infantry company on an armored personnel carrier. One company out of twelve. A noticeable number of half-tracked armored personnel carriers was only in the 10th Panzer Division (one motorized infantry battalion from

four) and the 1st Panzer Division (two battalions on an armored personnel carrier). [61] The vehicles used by the motorized infantry of the Wehrmacht's tank divisions were not three-axle Studebakers at all, much less today's diesel Urals; an avalanche of assorted vehicles rolled eastward, including captured French buses and grain vans. Even in the summer of 1941, after the first rain (or no rain, but on the sandy forest roads of Belarus and Lithuania), motorized infantry lagged behind the tank avant-garde, which made it extremely difficult to organize interaction in battle. Let us now return to Table 5. The types of German tanks are placed in it according to a

single criterion: the caliber of the gun and the weight of the fragmentation projectile [22]; at the same time, we are not talking at all about the fact that, according to other criteria, the Pz-IV can be equated with the T-34, etc. As we can see, in terms of the number of tank "trunks", the Soviet tank division of the regular composition exceeds the German one by 2.4 times (321 against 136). Due to the fact that there are much more "three-inch barrels" in the Soviet division (273 versus 30), in terms of the weight of the total And all this - a volley of tank guns, it **exceeds the German five times** . into account 56 BA-10 armored vehicles armed with a 45-mm cannon. without taking

The striking superiority of the tank division of the Red Army in terms of the number and caliber of tank guns makes it understandable and logical for the absence of an anti-tank artillery division in its structure. In the tank division of the Wehrmacht there was an anti-tank battalion of a standard 3-company composition (36 37 mm caliber guns, by the beginning of the invasion of the USSR in some divisions one company of 37-mm "mallets" was replaced by 9 50 mm caliber guns). In a Soviet division, a division of towed 45 mm anti-tank guns would look strange next to 273 much more powerful 76 mm guns covered with tank armor. As for the motorized division - the Soviet analogue of the Wehrmacht tank division, it included a standard anti-tank division (18 "forty-five"), another 12 anti-tank guns were part of two motorized rifle regiments of the division. In addition, 8 long-barreled 76-mm cannons from the artillery regiment of a motorized division, four 76-mm anti-aircraft guns, and 18 BA-10 armored vehicles could be involved in repelling an enemy tank attack.

The only parameter by which the fire capabilities of a German tank division were higher was the ratio of the number of artillery regiments. In the tank division of the Red Army there are two divisions (12 122-mm and 12 152-mm howitzers), in the artillery regiment of the tank division of the Wehrmacht there are three divisions (24 105-mm and 12 150-mm howitzers). The Germans have one and a half times more barrels, but taking into account the difference in the weight of shells of 105-mm and 122-mm howitzers (15 and 22 kg), the superiority in the total weight of an artillery salvo becomes

minimum (876 and 744 kg). It is unlikely that these two figures can serve as a reasonable basis for asserting that the Soviet tank division was underloaded with artillery. However, the meager superiority disappears altogether in those cases when four 150-mm howitzers were replaced by four 105-mm guns in the heavy artillery division of a German division. **Means of anti-tank defense**

The ratio

of the number, armament and armor

protection of the new Soviet tanks (KV and T-34) and the best German ones (the latest modifications of the Pz-III with a 50-mm cannon) left the Germans little chance of success in a tank duel; It is no coincidence that the commanders of the Red Army in their reports unanimously note: "enemy tanks do not engage in battle with our tanks." The madness of the brave in the Wehrmacht was not encouraged, and tank troops were used - at least in all those situations when the Germans had the opportunity to impose their initiative on the enemy - to solve the main problem ("tanks are a means of breaking through and demoralizing the rear and flanks" ) .

On the other hand, the mechanized corps of the Red Army - although in theory and in pre-war plans they were considered the main tool for launching a counterattack on the enemy's tank formations that had broken through - in most cases fought against the German infantry. In particular, out of five mechanized corps equipped with a significant number of new types of tanks (3 MK, 6 MK, 4 MK, 8 MK, 15 MK), three shattered after a collision with Wehrmacht infantry; in the oncoming tank battle, only 3 MKs participated (with the same result). To understand the course and outcome of these battles, it is necessary to consider in detail the possibilities of anti-tank infantry defense during the beginning of the 2nd MV. First of all, it is

necessary to clarify the specific meaning of the term

"protivoprotivoprotnoproizvoditelnoe" repeatedly used above. The shells are different. The projectile of the 122-mm Soviet A-19 cannon at a kilometer range pierced an armor plate of 180 mm (twice as thick as the frontal armor of the Tiger). And a 122 mm cannon is by no means the limit of the capabilities of cannon artillery - on heavy cruisers and battleships there were "barrels" of 250-350 mm caliber, which had breathtaking energy characteristics. However, battleships with tanks, as a rule, do not fight. Accordingly, under the "anti-shell armor" of tanks is understood their ability to withstand a direct hit by shells from a well-defined list of artillery systems.

Which ones? There are two complementary approaches to defining this list. The most common, simple and



understandable: any artillery systems that are in service with the infantry (rifle) division of the enemy - and nothing more. The logic here is quite obvious - during the time the division commander requests and receives support from corps or army artillery, the tanks will "roll out" his division and go into the operational depth of

defense. The second approach is based on the fact that in order to successfully conduct a duel with a tank, an anti-tank gun must have not only sufficient penetration, but also small size and weight. The first allows the gun to be reliably disguised and thus win the "right of the first shot", the second (light weight) allows the forces of the calculation itself to repeatedly change the firing position during the battle. The specific figures for the maximum weight of anti-tank guns, as the practice of the war showed, should not exceed 1.5 tons (the most massive systems of the final period of the Second World War fit into this range: the German 75-mm Pak-40, Soviet 57-mm ZiS-2 and 76-mm ZiS-3 division).

Thus, in relation to June 1941, the concept of "anti-shell armor" specifically means: for a Red Army tank - the ability to withstand a hit by a German 37-mm Pak-36 cannon, for a Wehrmacht tank - the ability to withstand a hit by a 45-mm anti-tank and 76-mm of a divisional cannon (we quite consciously remove the 50-mm Pak-38 and 76-mm anti-aircraft guns that were available in some German and Soviet infantry divisions in piece quantities beyond the discussion of typical, most common combat situations). Before you start flipping through the relevant guides, it is useful to understand that the very

concept of "armor penetration" is very complex and ambiguous. What is considered a breakthrough? A tiny crack on the back side of the armor plate ("rear strength limit", in professional language)? Or a hole through which an armor-piercing projectile passed entirely ("penetration limit")? Or a hole in the armor the size of a soccer ball? Finally, the very process of interaction between a projectile and an obstacle is probabilistic, i.e., projectiles taken from the same factory batch and fired from the same gun may or may not have penetrated the target. It is worth noting that the test standards adopted in the USSR were among the most stringent - the transfer of more than 90% of the mass of the projectile through the barrier in 75% of hits. All these differences in the methods of assessment lead to the fact that the indicators of armor penetration of anti-tank guns given in different sources differ significantly. This was taken into account when compiling Table 6.

|                      | 37-мм Pak-36  | 45-мм обр. 37 г. | 76-мм УСВ     |
|----------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| Вес БР-снаряда, кг   | 0,68          | 1,43             | 6,2           |
| Дистанция 100 м (мм) | 50–38 / 42–31 | 58–47 / 43–40    | 80–74 / 69–65 |
| Дистанция 500 м (мм) | 48–35 / 36–27 | 50–43 / 44–32    | 75–70 / 61–55 |

**Table 6**

**Note:** Encounter angle with armor 90 degrees / Encounter angle

60 degrees. There are many numbers, but the conclusions from these figures are extremely simple. Soviet tanks of the "old types" (T-26, BT, T-28) had armor 15–22 mm thick. Such armor was always penetrated by the German 37-mm cannon, at any real distances of aimed fire. German tanks 38-40s. (as well as light Czech tanks adopted by the Wehrmacht) had armor 15–30 mm thick. Such armor was always penetrated by Soviet anti-tank guns, at any real distances of aimed fire. It can be said that there is complete "equality in poverty", and yet German tanks are "more equal than others" - they had to meet with heavier Soviet BR shells, and there is a significant difference in the armor effect of a projectile weighing 680 g and a projectile weighing 6.2 kg. At the turn of the 1940s and 1941s, future opponents began to strengthen the armor protection of their tanks. "All of Europe" worked for Hitler (an interesting "all-Europe", which did not include Great Britain, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, and Italy also had to spend German resources on arming), but it worked poorly, not in a Stalinist way. As a result, all that was done by joint efforts was to screw (or weld) steel "patches" to the frontal plates of the hull of the Pz-III and Pz-IV tanks. Thus, the thickness of the frontal armor increased to 50-60 mm, which already exceeded the armor penetration of the "forty-five" [23]. Then, on the following modifications, the armor of the "forehead" of the tower was increased to 50 mm. The side and rear of the hull and turrets of all German tanks still **remained with 20–30 mm bulletproof armor**.

A tank on the battlefield does not always move strictly in a straight line, exposing only its "forehead" to the fire of anti-tank guns; The tank turret was not accidentally made to rotate (although this creates a lot of technical and layout problems), but at every turn, the German tank exposed the thin side of the turret to anti-tank fire. And yet, the most massive 45-mm guns (let me remind you that they were also armed with Soviet light tanks and BA-10 armored vehicles) became "limitedly suitable" for fighting Wehrmacht medium tanks. Now, when meeting with them, it was necessary to use 76-mm "divisions", which were relatively few (16 per division), and they were not directly in the composition of the rifle regiment at all. However, there were not too many tanks with "blotches". Their exact number as of June 22, 1941 on the Eastern Front is not

nobody knows. It is customary to include in this list all Pz-III with a 50-mm cannon (707 units) and some indefinite "majority" of the total number (439 units) of Pz-IV tanks. Even with this approach, one third of the total number of Wehrmacht tank groups is obtained (moreover, in 6 out of 17 tank divisions there were no "triples" at all). However, acquaintance with the documents of the headquarters of the Red Army casts doubt on the correctness of this assessment - in most cases, when describing a meeting with enemy tanks armed with 75-mm and 50-mm guns, the thickness of their armor is estimated at 25-30-40 mm. This could still be explained by haste (in battle, there is no time to work with a micrometer), but in a generalizing document prepared at the GABTU (judging by the incoming record keeping number - 1/28/1942), the "troika" is described as a tank with armor thickness **"frontal, side and tower - 30 mm"** ; about the "four" it is said: **"frontal armor 40-50 mm, side armor 20-40 mm, towers - 20 mm."** [62] Stalin prepared for the war

seriously and had significant raw materials and labor resources for this. By the way, they didn't forget about the "patches" either (medium three-turreted T-28 tanks were shielded with additional armor), but the main thing was that by June 1, 1941, the Red Army had almost one and a half thousand tanks of "new types" ( 545 KV and 969 T-34). These machines posed an almost impossible task for the anti-tank gunnery of the German infantry division. The hull and turret of the heavy KV tank had an armor thickness of 75 mm (on some modifications, the "forehead" was reinforced to 90 mm). Under no circumstances could the 37-mm German gun penetrate this.

The body of the medium tank T-34 was welded from armor plates with a thickness of "only" 40 and 45 mm, but these millimeters were installed at large angles. The frontal hull plate had a slope of 60 degrees from the vertical, which provided an almost guaranteed rebound of an armor-piercing projectile [24]. The side plate of the hull (40 mm) was set at an angle of 40 degrees, the side of the turret (52 mm thick) had a slope of 30 degrees. At such angles of encounter between the projectile and armor, the 37-mm German cannon turned out to be practically useless even at the closest distances (for which it received the contemptuous nickname "mallet" from the Wehrmacht soldiers). Yes, the "thirty-four" was vulnerable to a vertical 45-mm hull side plate, but in order to hit it, it was necessary to drive the projectile into the gap between the track rollers - the trick is not for the faint of heart ...

We recall once again that there were no other guns (analogues of the Soviet long-barreled 76-mm "divisions" and anti-aircraft guns) in the armament of the Wehrmacht infantry division. The latest at that time 50-mm Pak-38 anti-tank guns were received only in every fourth

infantry division of the Eastern Front, and even then in the amount of 2 units per infantry regiment. This made it possible to knock out several "wandering" tanks, but the Wehrmacht infantry division could not repel the massive attack of the T-34 and KV on its own.

***"Anti-tank defense is without a doubt the saddest chapter in the history of the German infantry. The path of suffering for the German infantry in the fight against Russian T-34 tanks goes from the 37-mm anti-tank gun, nicknamed the "mallet" in the army, through the 50-mm to the 75-mm mechanically driven anti-tank gun. Apparently, it will remain completely unknown why within three and a half years from the moment the T-34 tank first appeared in August 1941 until April 1945, an acceptable anti-tank infantry weapon was not created. [63]***

This famous quote from Middeldorf's book has a lot of noteworthy things, in particular, the words that T-34 tanks allegedly appeared at the front only in August 1941 (that is, almost a thousand of these tanks, which were in the western districts in June, went unnoticed). As for the long-term rearmament of the infantry with an adequate anti-tank gun, one of the reasons for this failure was an attempt to solve the problem "quickly and simply" - by improving the projectile to the existing small-caliber anti-tank guns.

Armor-piercing shells are different, and in terms of their design, this "blank" is not at all as simple as you might think. At the end of the 30s, the so-called. "sub-caliber" projectile. It had a rather complex structure, consisting of a very hard armor-piercing core inserted into a shell ("pallet"), outwardly similar to a spool of thread; a light aerodynamic fairing was installed on the nose of the projectile. When the projectile hit the target, the fairing was instantly crushed, and the core pierced the armor. This design made it possible to approximately halve the weight of the projectile and significantly increase its initial speed. So, a sub-caliber projectile for a 37-mm cannon had an initial speed of 1020 m / s (against 760 m / s for a conventional BR projectile), a sub-caliber projectile for a 50-mm

Pak-38 accelerated to a speed of 1200 m / s (against 830 m / s for a conventional one). As a result, stunning figures appeared in the tables of armor penetration: a standard German 37-mm cannon at a 100-meter distance pierced armor of 75–80 mm with a sub-caliber projectile (and this is the level of armor protection of a heavy KV tank), a 50-mm Pak-38 even pierced at 100 meters of 120 mm of armor. It can be assumed that for someone such tables

made a strong impression, and in 1940 German factories produced 319 thousand 37-mm sub-caliber shells. [64] After

these shells met with new Soviet tanks, it turned out that "not all that glitters is gold." It turned out so clearly that in 1941 the production of 37-mm sub-caliber BR shells was reduced to 16 thousand, and then was curtailed altogether. Why?

First of all, because the tank is not a balloon, which is enough to pierce with a needle. The mere fact of the appearance of a through hole in the armor does not guarantee the destruction of the tank. Let's take one typical example. Field firing of a light T-26 from an anti-tank rifle showed that out of 39 bullets that pierced the tank's armor, only one damaged the "leg" of one of the three dummies depicting the crew; serious damage to the structure caused only two hits in the gas tank. The sub-caliber projectile for the 37-mm cannon was nothing more than a thick hard "nail", which could disable the tank only in the event of an accidental hit on a particularly vulnerable unit. The situation was aggravated by the fact that the Soviet tanks of the "new types" (T-34 and KV) were diesel and, by definition, there could not be gasoline vapors inside them that could flare up from the very first spark.

It is no coincidence that "normal" shells were supplied with an explosive charge (from 120 to 155 g in Soviet BR shells for a 76-mm gun) and a bottom fuse; an explosion inside the closed volume of the tank incapacitated the crew, could cause ignition of the engine compartment and detonation of the ammunition rack - but there was no bursting charge in sub-caliber shells by definition.

Further. Due to the operation of an immutable physical law [25], a light sub-caliber projectile lost its initial speed faster. As a result, at a distance of more than 600-700 m, the effectiveness of a sub-caliber projectile decreased to the level of a conventional "blank". But that's not all - a long and relatively thin solid core crumbled when it met with an inclined sheet of armor "thirty-four". So, the above-mentioned survey of 154 downed T-34s in the fall of 1942 showed that only 20% of the hits of sub-caliber shells led to the penetration of the frontal hull plate (although "according to the plate" such a shell had to flash through 45 mm armor like a sheet of cardboard).

The last (but not least!) disadvantage of sabot shells was that the solid core was made of tungsten carbide. Tungsten is an expensive exotic, and scattered (in the truest sense of the word) as a scarce raw material necessary for both electronics and the production of special steels, Germany in

time of a protracted war could not. The volume of production of 50-mm sub-caliber shells decreased from 644 thousand in 1941 to 40 thousand in 1943, and then was completely discontinued. Only the 75-mm Pak 40 anti-tank gun with a "normal" caliber projectile could become a real and, alas, very effective (the percentage of defeats reached 90% of cases when a projectile hit a tank) a means of fighting Soviet tanks. The

principle of concentration of forces, about which we spoke in such detail in relation to tank forces, is also true in the organization of anti-tank defense. It is not surprising that both sides (Germany and the USSR) created special anti-tank units in the structure of their armed forces. In the Wehrmacht, the main tool for strengthening anti-tank defense was a standard battalion (36 guns of 37 mm caliber) on a mechanical (automobile) traction, exactly the same as in any infantry division. With the same restrictions on combat effectiveness, which created the appearance on the battlefield of the T-34 and KV tanks. By June 22, 1941, there were 6 (six) such battalions on the entire Eastern Front. Total - 216 additional "beaters" at the front from the Baltic to the Black Sea.

But that is not all. After all, there was "all-Europe", from which Hitler got a couple of hundred 47-mm Skoda anti-tank guns captured in Czechoslovakia, mod. 1938 (this system, in terms of the weight of the BR projectile and its initial energy, was 15-20% superior to our "forty-five"). Since the primitive and outdated wheeled design of the Czech cannon did not allow it to be transported at a speed of more than 15 km / h, the Germans decided to pile this cannon on the chassis of the Pz-I light tankette. This is how an amazing "device" appeared, which received the proud name "tank destroyer" (Panzerjäger I).

If you try to find an analogue of this structure among the armored vehicles of the Red Army, then you need to imagine a light tank T-26, which was cut off the roof and rear of the tower (the cannon on the German "fighter" was placed in an open armored wheelhouse). In terms of armor (13-15 mm), engine power (90-100 l / s) and armament, they were quite comparable. The main difference was that the chassis of the German light tankette (suspension, transmission) was not originally designed for such a load. In order not to waste more than our own words, let's move on to quoting a document - a report by the commander of the 643rd anti-tank battalion, who took part in the battles in France:

***"... Joint marches with infantry units led to the failure of materiel. Clutch and differential failures were especially common. Joint marches with tank units led to similar destructive results ... Every half hour in the first***

**20 km march, it is necessary to make stops to cool the engines, perform inspection, lubricate and repair if necessary. In the future, stops must be made every 30 km of run ...**

**The view from the car is exceptionally poor. It is possible to look forward through the top edge of the cutting shield, which can result in a "Kopfschuesse" (which can be translated as "head axe"). In street battles, the crew is actually deprived of the opportunity to observe the battlefield ... A brave enemy infantryman is able to easily destroy the crew with a hand grenade, throwing it from the sides or from**

**the stern ... The armor of the chassis is inadequate. Shells from French 25 mm anti-tank guns penetrate armor, firing even from long distances. Even armor-piercing bullets of rifle caliber can penetrate armor-piercing armor-piercing bullets of rifle caliber... The high cabins of our tank destroyers made the work of vehicles on the battlefield extremely dangerous..." [65]**

Only 202 units of such miracle machines were produced. They were equipped with separate anti-tank battalions, of which there were eight on the Eastern Front on June 22, 1941 (2 in the Sever GA, 5 in the Center GA, 1 in the South GA). According to the state, each battalion should have had 3 companies of 9 vehicles each, but in fact there were fewer of them, an average of 20 per battalion. Two more companies were listed as part of the 900th motorized brigade and the SS brigade "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler". On the eve of the invasion of the USSR, the Germans launched the production of 47-mm sub-caliber shells, which increased the armor penetration of self-propelled guns - with all the above-mentioned reservations. The practice of the combat use of the "Panzerjager" on the Eastern Front confirmed the reputation he deserved earlier. The commander of the 521st battalion in July 1941 reported:

**"When attacking enemy positions equipped with anti-tank guns and artillery, as was the case with Mogilev and Rogachev, a high cabin became a good target, and the Panzerjager was destroyed before it could enter the battle. With a close explosion of a heavy artillery shell, fragments pierced thin armor, as was the case with Rogachev. The Russian 45-mm anti-tank gun hit armor at a distance of 1200 m. The 1st company lost 5 vehicles in these battles, of which only 2 were possible restore..."**

The German "tank destroyer" was doomed from the start. An anti-tank gun should be light, compact and inconspicuous - or it should be placed on the chassis of a medium (even better - heavy) tank and covered with armor, and the armor is exceptionally strong, allowing you to duel with any enemy tank; the anti-tank gun on the chassis of a light tankette with bulletproof armor is a deliberate absurdity.

The USSR took a different path. Not battalions, and not even regiments, were intended to strengthen anti-tank defense. By a resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR of April 23 and the corresponding directives of the NPO of April 26, 1941, a decision was made to form 10 anti-tank artillery brigades of the High Command Reserve (five in the Kiev OVO, three in the Western and two in the Baltic). The war began ahead of Stalin's deadline, and in fact most of the PTABR was not fully equipped by June 22, but it makes sense to consider this structure in more detail in order to assess the scale and seriousness of the intentions of the Soviet

military-political leadership. According to the approved staffing table, the PTABR had 2 artillery regiments of 5 divisions each, a total of 10 divisions, 120 anti-tank guns in the brigade. The caliber of the anti-tank weapons of the brigade began with the 76-mm F-22 guns (it had a slightly higher muzzle velocity and armor penetration than the USV gun indicated above in Table 6). 4 divisions were armed with such guns, and for the next two years, before the advent of the Tigers and Panthers, this was enough to defeat any Wehrmacht tank.

However, those who developed the staffing table for the PTABR took the matter more seriously. Another 4 divisions of the brigade were armed with 85-mm anti-aircraft guns 61-K arr. 1939. The use of this gun was already "excessive cruelty" - at a distance of 1 km, an anti-aircraft gun could pierce an armor plate 110 mm thick, and the Germans did not even have anything like that in the drawings. But even this seemed not enough, and 2 divisions of 107-

mm guns were introduced into the PTABR! Since the experience of the German "blitzkrieg" in France showed that the offensive of the Wehrmacht's tank divisions was tirelessly supported by the actions of dive bombers, an unusually large number of air defense systems were introduced into the PTABR: 16 rapid-fire 37-mm anti-aircraft guns and 36 DShK heavy machine guns. In addition, the mine-sapper and motor transport battalions were included in the brigade. In total, the brigade was supposed to have 5322 people, 11 cars, 707 trucks and special vehicles, 165 tracked tractors.

"To whom much is given, much will be required." The command of the Red Army placed serious hopes on the PTABR, which is clearly evidenced by the document: approved on June 3, 1941 by the chief of staff of the Kiev OVO "Temporary instructions for combat training, combat use and the formation of combat formations of the PTABR". [67]



Combat use was as follows. On a front section 3–4 km wide, the PTABR was supposed to stop the advance of 400–500 enemy tanks (and this is not a typo). At the same time, it was expected that the steel avalanche would move **"in successive waves of 20-30 tanks per km of front, that is, about five waves"** at a speed of 15 km / h (250 m / min). The battle order of the brigade was supposed to be in two echelons: in the first 4 divisions of 76-mm guns and one division of 107-mm guns in the most threatened direction, 4 divisions of 85-mm guns and 1 echelon of 107-mm (i.e., more powerful guns) were withdrawn to the reserve of the brigade commander to destroy heavy tanks that had broken through into the depths of the defense.

The actions of the first echelon are described as follows: **"Each gun from a range of 1200 m is capable of firing at least 3-4 aimed shots per minute, of which 1 shot disables the tank"** (taking into account the power of the guns used, the estimate is quite realistic. - *M.S.* ). **Consequently, the first and second echelons of tanks are put out of action by 100%, not reaching the firing positions by 200 meters** . In other words, one gun was supposed to disable four enemy tanks before the tanks rolled into firing positions. Further in the "Temporary Directions" is not described; it was probably expected that the enemy, after such a massacre, would stop the attack, or the most persistent would be shot by the guns of the second echelon of the brigade.

Such an army was built in the early 40s in the USSR. Huge, armed with mountains of the latest weapons. Didn't these thousands and tens of thousands of tanks, guns, and mortars give reason to hope for a crushing success in the war?

The correct answer is no. Guns don't fight themselves, people fight. This trivial, but also the most important thought was clearly recorded in the Field Manual of the Red Army: **"The most valuable thing in the Red Army is the new man of the Stalin era. He has a decisive role in the battle. Without him, all technical means of struggle are dead, in his hands they become a formidable weapon. The entire personnel of the Red Army is brought up in the Bolshevik spirit of activity, bold initiative, unshakable impulse, invincible perseverance and constant desire to smash the enemy "** (PU-39, p. 6).

However, according to the authoritative opinion of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR (later - the chairman of the Defense Committee under the Council of People's Commissars), the people were eager to fight anyway, without any education. Speaking at the May Day parade in 1939, comrade. Voroshilov literally stated the following: **"The Soviet people not only know how, but also love to fight!"**

Next question. Was there at least one among the generals and marshals, people's commissars and party secretaries who surrounded Stalin who could tell him something like this: "Koba, half the country hates you with fierce hatred, the rest survive as best they can. With the first shots of a real, big war, your entire "invincible army" will scatter through the forests or surrender." The correct answer is no. There were no such brave ones. Not a single person. That's why Comrade. Stalin and his marshals developed bold plans, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

## Chapter 1.2 The Big Game

Since the publication of V. Suvorov's book "Icebreaker", the issues of military planning in the USSR in 1939-1941 have become (and still remain) one of the most acute topics of public discussion. For the "patriots of the Soviet Union" furious, foaming at the mouth, denial of the fact that the Red Army had plans to invade Europe became a matter of valor, honor and heroism; they intend to deny to the end, ignoring any arguments and facts, with the stupid stubbornness of the hero of a well-known series of jokes in which a peasant without panties is found in someone else's bedroom ... Everything that I wanted and could say about this is set out in the articles "Three Plans of Comrade Stalin" and "First Strike". [69] Those who wish can familiarize themselves. For all that, the topic is still far from exhausted, in particular, it also needs to expand the chronological framework (many "wonderful discoveries" await us in studying the question of the participation of the USSR in the "Sudet crisis" of 1938). We will not occupy the pages of this book with a big discussion on the "Suvorov theme" and will proceed immediately to the main facts and conclusions from them.

### Documents

At the moment, at least 13 text documents are available, drawn up between the summer of 1940 and May 1941, which directly reflect the process of developing a plan for the war against Germany. These are: - Memorandum of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR and

the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army in the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks to I.V. Stalin and V.M. later August 15, 1940 [70] - Document with the same title, number 103202 dated September 18, 1940 [71] -

Memorandum of the People's Commissar of Defense of

the USSR and the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army in the Central Committee of the All-Union

Communist Party of Bolsheviks I.V. Stalin and V.M. Molotov No. 103313 of October 1940 (this document is usually referred to as the "refined October strategic deployment plan"). [72] - Directive of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR to the commander of the Leningrad Military District on the development

of an operational deployment plan, w / n, dated November 25, 1940 [73] - Instructions of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR on the development of an operational plan

deployment of the armies of the Kiev OVO, w / n, dated November 28, 1940 [74]

- Memorandum of the chief of staff of the Kiev OVO by decision of the Military Council of the South-Western Front according to the operational deployment plan, w / n, no later than December 1940 [75]

- Directive of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR on the development of a plan for the operational deployment of the armies of the Baltic OVO, w / n, no later than January 1941 [76] -

- Note on the action plan of the Western Front, w / n, no later than February 1941 [77] - Directive People's

- Commissar of Defense of the USSR on the development of a plan for the operational deployment of the armies of the Baltic OVO, b / n, dated March 3, 1941 [78] - Memorandum of the

- People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR and the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks I.V. Stalin and V.M. Molotov "An updated plan for the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces of the USSR in the West and in the East", b / n,

- dated March 11, 1941 [79] - Directive of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR for the development of a plan for the operational deployment of the troops of the Western OVO, w / n, April 1941 [80]

- Directive of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR on the development of a plan for the operational deployment of troops of the Leningrad Military District, w / n, dated April 11,

- 1941 [81] - Considerations on the plan for the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union in the event of a war with Germany and its allies, w / n, May 1941 [82]

Thus, we have at our disposal five versions of the general strategic plan of the Red Army and two text documents each reflecting the development of plans for the operational deployment of troops from each of the four western districts / fronts. It is extremely important to note that the six documents are, in form and content, orders (directives) of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR; **these are not "draft draft proposals", but binding orders from the country's top military leadership.**

Several dozen working maps have been declassified (TsAMO. F. 16. Op. 2951. D. 240, 244, 245), which graphically reflect both the plans and directives mentioned above, as well as some other intermediate stages of their development (in particular, there are maps with the dates of February 24 and April 6, which do not coincide with the dates of compilation of known text documents; in addition, the composition of the group of Red Army troops indicated on the maps does not always completely coincide with text documents).

At least from September 1940 to May 1941, all known versions of the Grand Plan - as well as the operational plans of districts / fronts that detail it - are in fact a single document, changing only in minor details from month to month. There is not only a semantic, but also a clear textual similarity of all these "considerations", "notes" and "directives". Like nesting dolls, the maps found in the archives are similar to each other - today they are quite suitable for the well-known observation test "find five differences" (Fig. 3 and 4).

All documents are a description of the plan for the preparation and conduct of a large-scale offensive operation carried out outside the state borders of the USSR. Strategic defense on one's own territory is not considered in them even as one of the possible options for action [26]. No other plans have ever been found. Considering that we have a lot of people who want to "repel hostile intrigues" and all the archives of the country were and remain at their disposal, it can be assumed with a 99.99% probability that no other plan simply existed. As for the concept of an offensive operation, it is invariably

formulated as follows: ***"The most advantageous is the deployment of our main forces south of the river. Pripyat in order to defeat the main forces of the Germans with powerful blows to Lublin, Radom and Krakow and, in the very first stage of the war, cut Germany off from the Balkan countries, deprive it of important economic bases and decisively influence the Balkan countries in matters of their participation in the war against us "*** . [83] The main blow was to be delivered by the troops of the Southwestern Front in cooperation with the left (southern) flank of the Western Front with the task of ***"inflicting a decisive defeat on Lublin, Radom, Sandomierz, the Krakow enemy grouping, to force the river. Vistula, take Krakow and Warsaw and go to the front of Warsaw, Lodz, Kreutzburn, Oppeln, Olomouc "*** (cities in Poland and Slovakia at a distance of 250-350 km west of the then border of the USSR. - ***M.S.*** ). The March (1941) version

[27] of the plan set the following pace of advance: on the 3rd day, occupy Lublin with mobile units (i.e., tank and motorized divisions), and on the 8th day of the operation - Krakow, "with the main forces" to leave on the river Vistula by the 10th day of the operation (i.e., even for the infantry, the rate of advance was planned to be about 10–12 km per day). The March version is also notable for the fact that that cherished word appears in it, without which the very intention of "smashing the main forces of the Germans" hangs in the air: ***" A further strategic goal for***

**The main forces of the Red Army, depending on the situation, can be set: to develop an operation through Poznan to Berlin (highlighted by me. - M.S. ), or to act to the south-west, to Prague and Vienna, or to strike [strike] to the north, to Torun and Danzig in order to bypass East Prussia.**



Rice. 3. Plan of the offensive of the Red Army, February 24, 1941.

What do I want to "prove" by this? Absolutely nothing, since there is no of the thesis that requires proof. The offensive, controversial orientation military doctrine of the Red Army is an indisputable fact. This is not a hypothesis, but a directive, already fixed in the second paragraph of the Field Manual PU-39. ***"If the enemy imposes war on us, the Workers 'and Peasants' Red Army will be the most attacking of all the armies that have ever attacked. We will wage the war offensively, with the most resolute goal of completely defeating the enemy on his own territory.*** It is equally indisputable that the offensive orientation

plans and the system of combat training of the Armed Forces can in no way serve as proof of the aggressiveness of the state's foreign policy. The army of any country, even the most peaceful, is created in order to win. The offensive was, is and will be the most effective way to solve this problem. "Offensive" and "aggression" are different words, from different dictionaries, and they are not always synonymous.



Rice. 4. Plan of the offensive of the Red Army, version April 27, 1941

The unchanging aggressiveness of the Stalinist empire also needs no proof. This aggressiveness found its expression not in paragraphs of the Charter and not in red arrows on operational maps; it cannot be covered with a "fig leaf" of words like "If the enemy imposes war on us ...". The indomitable desire for worldwide expansion was recorded in the state emblem of the USSR, on which the hammer and sickle covered the entire globe, and the boundaries of the "proletarian state" were not marked even by the thinnest line.

The Declaration on the Establishment of the USSR (December 30, 1922) explicitly stated that the new state **"will serve as a faithful bulwark against world capitalism and a new decisive step along the path of uniting the working people of all countries into the World Socialist Soviet Republic."** Completely official war propaganda permeated all spheres of life in the USSR in the 1930s [28]. Directly in Moscow was the headquarters of a global subversive organization (the Comintern), which, ignoring state borders and international law, tried (fortunately, unsuccessfully) to impose a Stalin-controlled dictatorship in many countries of the world. Finally, the desire for expansion found its direct expression in the expansion of the borders of the empire, which took place from 1922 to 1953.

Only the ideological "packaging" has changed. It all started with a furious messianic impulse (**"the world is rushing to the new shore with a swirling cavalry"**), with a dream of a new earth and new heavens, under which there will be no place for such obsolete nonsense as state borders (**"to live in a world without Russia and Latvia a single human hostel"**), with faith, even sincere, that the whole world is waiting for its transformation into a huge Stalinist barrack (**"When the last border sign / Our soldiers will sweep off the face of the earth / The red flag will triumph everywhere / Flowers will open their flowers for everyone cups / And the people who inhabit the world, / Following you, one-sixth of the world / Like conquerors, will come to the feast / Proclaim a great victory "**).

The flowers of revolutionary enthusiasm withered quickly. The last attempt to portray something like a "workers' uprising" was made on December 1, 1939, when, in the first days of the invasion of Finland, the appearance of some kind of "people's government of democratic Finland" was announced; True, to the ridicule of the whole world, Comrade was appointed head of this mythical government. Kuusinen, member of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks since 1918, living in Moscow. Stalin did not disgrace himself like that again, and all subsequent "liberations" were carried out according to



scheme: first - military occupation, and only after that - spontaneous rallies, during which "all the working people are unanimous ...".

By the summer of 1941, Soviet propaganda finally dropped all camouflage. The directive "On the state of military-political propaganda" personally prepared in early June by the secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks Shcherbakov was drawn up in the following terms: "The foreign policy of the Soviet Union has nothing to do with pacifism, **with the desire to achieve peace at any cost ... Leninism teaches that the country of socialism, taking advantage of the favorable international situation, must and will be obliged to take the initiative in offensive military operations...**" [84] **The last**

**version** At the

beginning of May, another version of the "Considerations on the Strategic Deployment Plan" appears. From the point of view of the plan of the operation, this fifth (since August 1940) version of the plan for the war against Germany did not differ in any way from its predecessors. In terms of tasks, directions of the main attacks, proportions of the distribution of troops between individual fronts, terms and boundaries, the May "Considerations" almost verbatim repeat the "Refined Strategic Deployment Plan" of March 11, 1941. Once again, it is planned to "destroy the main forces of the German army deployed south of **Deblin , and exit by the 30th day of the operation to the front of Ostrolenka, r. Narew, Lovich, Lodz, Kreutzburg, Oppeln, Olomouc. The subsequent strategic goal is to have: an offensive from the Katowice region in a northern or northwestern direction to defeat the large forces of the Center and the Northern wing of the German front and seize the territory of former Poland and East Prussia. The immediate task is to defeat the German army east of the river. Vistula and in the Krakow direction, go to the rivers Narew, Vistula and capture the Katowice area ...**" The complete

ignorance of the developers of the Considerations about the plans of the enemy remains just as unchanged. Alas, "Hitler's secrets are on Stalin's desk" are found only in the writings of retired KGB men. In fact, in the May "Considerations" the intentions of the enemy are described as follows:

**"Most likely, the main forces of the German army, consisting of ... will be deployed south of the Brest-Demblin line to strike in the direction of Kovel, Rovno, Kyiv. This blow will apparently be accompanied by a blow in the north from East Prussia to Vilna and Riga, as well as short, concentric blows from Suwalki and Brest to Volkovysk, Baranovichi. In the south, strikes should be expected: a) in the direction of Zhmerinka - the Romanian army, supported by the German**

**divisions; b) in the direction of Munkach** (now Mukachevo. - **M.S.** ), **Lviv; c) Sanok, Lvov.**

There is not even a remote resemblance to the real plans of the Germans. The main forces of the Wehrmacht (Army Group "Center") were deployed not to the south, but to the north of the strip of swamps of Polesie (**"from the line Brest - Demblin"**); the most powerful 2nd Panzer Group, concentrated at Brest, had the task of delivering the main blow to a depth of 300-400 km, on Minsk and Bobruisk, and not at all a short auxiliary blow to Baranovichi. In the zone of Army Group South, the 1st Panzer Group delivered the main blow, but not through the swampy forest near Kovel, but 50–60 km to the south, in the zone of Ustilug, Krystynopol (now Chervonograd); in the Carpathians (**"in the direction of Munkach, Lvov; Sanok, Lvov"**) there were no German troops at all (not counting the two so-called "security", i.e., police divisions); a blow under the southern base of the "Lvov ledge" ("in **the direction of Zhmerinka**") was struck, but three weeks after the start of the war, in a completely different operational situation.

However, such an erroneous assessment of the enemy's intentions was to a certain extent "nullified" by the fact that the developers of the "Considerations" were not at all going to provide the enemy with the opportunity to implement his (the enemy's) offensive plans: "Given that Germany currently keeps its army mobilized, with deployed **rear**, **it has the ability to warn us in deployment and launch a surprise strike. In order to prevent this, I consider it necessary in no case to give the initiative of action to the German Command, to preempt the enemy in deployment and attack the German army at a time when it will be in the deployment stage and will not have time to organize the front and the interaction of the military branches.**

It makes sense, if possible, to clarify the chronology of the compilation and discussion of this document. Like others, this version of the plan was written by the hand of Major General Vasilevsky, Deputy Chief of the Operational Directorate of the General Staff. The document is made on the letterhead of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR, only the month (May) is indicated, the date is not affixed. Stalin, to whom the Considerations are addressed, is this time named Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars; therefore, the document could not have been drawn up earlier than May 5, 1941. There is also a working map signed by Vasilevsky on May 15, 1941 [89] (see Fig. 16). Now let's turn to such a textbook source as the Journal of Visits to Stalin's Cabinet. For the convenience of the reader, we summarize the information in Table 7, from which it can be seen - with whom and h

carried out in Stalin's office by People's Commissar of Defense Tymoshenko and Chief of the General Staff

Zhukov: **Table 7**

| Дата   | Кто был еще:                     | Продолжительность |
|--------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 10 мая | Молотов, Маленков                | 1 ч. 50 мин.      |
| 12 мая | Молотов, Каганович, Вознесенский | 1 ч. 35 мин.      |
| 14 мая | Каганович                        | 1 ч. 55 мин.      |
| 19 мая | Молотов, Ватутин                 | 1 ч. 25 мин.      |
| 23 мая | Молотов, Каганович               | 2 ч. 20 мин.      |

**Note:** in fact, on May 23, Timoshenko and Zhukov spent 2 hours and 55 minutes in Stalin's office, but the last 35 minutes. were devoted to a meeting with a group of designers of aviation weapons.

The picture, in my opinion, is quite clear. On May 10, the Boss's office gathers in full force (and without a single superfluous person) precisely the group that represents the repeatedly mentioned "top military-political leadership of the USSR." Molotov is Stalin's formal deputy in the government and in fact the "second person" in the country; Malenkov - Secretary of the Central Committee, member of the Main Military Council, and two top leaders of the military department (Timoshenko and Zhukov). The troika, which nominally had the right to sign the most important Directives, and Stalin and Molotov - two people who actually made the main political decisions. There is every reason to assume that it was then, on May 10, that the "Considerations" were first reported to Stalin. Then, on May 12 and 14, the plan for the war against Germany was worked out in detail. The two-time participation in the meetings of the People's Commissar of Railways Kaganovich is very indicative - he had no direct relation to the solution of purely military, operational issues, but if it was not about plans for the distant future, but about quite practical actions for the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces, then here without iron roads are indispensable, and at this stage locomotives and wagons are incomparably more important than tanks. It is no coincidence that the appearance (very short, only for 15 minutes) of the chairman of the State Planning Committee of the USSR Voznesensky - if it was a question of strategic deployment, then part of it is mobilization deployment (mobilization), which inevitably disrupts the normal rhythm of economic activity. Then, from May 14 to May 19, there is a pause in the meetings, and it is at this moment that Vasilevsky signs the May 15 card. Then, on May 19, the whole trio of planners gathered in Stalin's office, including Deputy Chief of the General Staff Vatutin, a very rare visitor to Stalin's

cabinet; there is every reason to assume that an amended strategic deployment plan was discussed, with clarifications and changes made as a result of the meeting on 10, 12 and 14 May. Finally, on May 23, this revised version could be discussed again (and very closely - 2 hours and 20 minutes) with the participation of the "chief railwayman" Kaganovich.

On May 24, 1941, an obviously extraordinary, hours-long Meeting took place. Molotov, Timoshenko, Zhukov and Vatutin were the first to enter Stalin's office. After 50 min. they were joined by the commanders of the troops of the five western border districts, members of the Military Councils and commanders of the Air Force of these districts, as well as the head of the Main Directorate of the Red Army Air Force Zhigarev. In such a broad composition, the Meeting lasted 2 hours and 30 minutes. Nothing of the kind happened either in the months before May 24, or after

that date until the outbreak of war. That's all that is known today about the May 24 Meeting. Soviet official historiography did not say a word about the subject of discussion and the decisions taken on May 24. Nothing was reported in their memoirs by the few participants in the Conference who survived to see Stalin's death. Declassified at the beginning of the 21st century, the Special Folders of the minutes of the meetings of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks for May 1941 (RGASPI. F. 17. Op. 162. D. 34–35) also do not contain even the slightest mention of this Meeting. The German archives will not help us either - none of the Conference participants was in German captivity. It remains only to state that the very fact of the total classification of everything related to the Meeting on May 24 speaks volumes: if the issues of the country's defense, preparations for repelling the Nazi invasion were discussed there, then

the corresponding quotes would be included in all school textbooks ... Chronologically, the last of The currently available series of pre-war strategic planning documents is the "Reference on the Deployment of the USSR Armed Forces in the Event of War in the West", no number, dated June 13, 1941. **[90]** The document was written by Vatutin. It does not contain plans for military operations, terms and boundaries of the

offensive. Only a long, long series of numbers of divisions, corps and armies. By itself, this document does little to understand the intentions and military plans of Stalin - but together with the map of May 15, 1941, he finally "puts everything in its place." The reference dated June 13 describes exactly the grouping of Red Army troops that is shown on the map dated May 15. The numbers of the armies, and their combat composition, and the numbers of the mechanized corps, and the scheme for the transfer of formations from the internal districts to t

it is reasonable to assume that it was precisely the plan of war that was recorded in the May "Considerations" - with additions and changes made in the course of five discussions in Stalin's office - remained the document in force. No other strategic deployment plan - at least until June 13, 1941

- did not appear.

### **"Unheard of in impudence ..." At**

dawn on June 22, 1941, Hitler struck the first blow. The initiative of action was in the hands of the German command. Why? There is hardly any other issue that has been discussed with such passion for half a century. Not daring to "tear off the covers" and expose the "whole truth", we will try to collect and systematize the few known documents and facts. To begin with, let's decide on the very formulation of the question: what,

in fact, happened on June 22, 1941? It happened not from the point of view of our current knowledge, but according to the opinion and assessment of high-ranking contemporaries of the events. Declassified at the beginning of the 21st century, archival funds allow us to give a specific and accurate answer to the question of how the high command of the Red Army assessed the day of June 22.

### ***"Operative report***

#### ***No. 01 of the General Staff of the Red Army at 10.00***

***22.06.41 4.00 22.6.41 the Germans, without any reason, raided our airfields and cities and crossed the border with ground troops ... (then follows a detailed, three- page summary of those received by that time in Moscow messages from the places of the first battles. - M.S. ) . The front commanders have put into effect a cover plan, and by active operations of mobile troops they are trying to destroy enemy units that have crossed the border. The enemy, having forestalled our troops in deployment (highlighted by me. - M.S. ) , forced the Red Army units to accept battle in the process of taking up their starting position according to the cover plan. Using this advantage, the enemy managed to achieve partial success in some areas. [97]*** Period. End of quote. Opersvodka No. 01 was signed by the Chief of the General Staff,

General of the Army Zhukov. Opersvodka No. 02 was released late in the evening on June 22 [29], and instead of Zhukov (who had already flown to the headquarters of the South-Western Front in Tarnopol) it was signed by the Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General Malandin. The events of the day were summarized as follows: ***"German regular troops during 22.6. fought with the border guards***

**USSR, with little success in some areas. In the afternoon, with the approach of the advanced units of the field troops of the Red Army, the attacks of the German troops on the predominant stretch of our border were repulsed with losses for the enemy . [98]** At 9 pm on June 22, Directive No. 3 was sent to the command of the fronts. The Chief Military Council (Timoshenko, Zhukov, Malenkov) again stated that "the **enemy, having suffered heavy losses, achieved little success in the indicated directions ...**". Further, the Directive set the task of **"surrounding and destroying with powerful concentric strikes"** the enemy that had broken through into Soviet territory, cross the border and occupy Suwalki and Lublin by the end of the day on June 24. [99]

On the evening of June 22, another summary was compiled Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff. This document is even more interesting:

***"Intelligence report No. 1/660724 of the General Staff of the Red***

***Army at 20.00 22.6. 1941 1. As a result of the hostilities on the day of 22/6/1941, the data available on 20/6/20 about the following enemy grouping located directly on the border with the USSR were actually confirmed ...*** (hereinafter a long list on seven

pages. - ***M.S. ). CONCLUSION: For 22.6 hours the enemy brought significant forces into battle, namely: 37–39 infantry, 5 motorized, 8 tank, and a total of 50–52 divisions. However, this is only about 30% of the enemy forces concentrated towards the front. [100]***

Yes exactly. The head of the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Red Army, Lieutenant General Golikov, begins the summary for June 22, 1941 with a sense of legitimate pride in the work done by his department ("the available data received actual confirmation ..."). Reasons for easy embarrassment comrade. He does not see Golikov in the events of the day on June 22. Unfortunately, he also does not see the real grouping of the enemy. Even according to the most accurate and restrained estimate [30], the Germans on the first day of the war brought into battle 72 divisions (59 infantry, 11 tank, 1 motorized and 1 cavalry), which was about 60% of the total number of the three Wehrmacht Army

Groups on the Eastern Front . In the following summary, the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff slightly increased the assessment of the enemy's current grouping (***"the total number of forces put into action by the enemy by the end of 23.6 is 62-64 divisions"*** ), but ended the document with a completely optimistic conclusion: ***"Given the overwhelming superiority of enemy forces compared to our cover divisions on the directions of its***

***evaluate the actions of our troops on June 22 and 23 as a whole as very positive, and recognize the rate of advance of the enemy as low. [101]***

Such assessments were given at the moment when the Germans crossed the Neman on a wide front, approached Vilnius, occupied Grodno, Kobrin and Pruzhany, and from the 11th and 4th Armies that were on the directions of the main enemy attacks, only numbers remained ...

To complete the picture, one should, of course, recall Directive No. 2, issued at 7:15 am. 22nd of June; formally, the document was issued on behalf of the Main Military Council, signed by Timoshenko, Zhukov and Malenkov, but at that time all three were at a meeting in the office of Stalin, who, presumably, was its real author:

***“June 22, 1941, at 04:00 in the morning, German aviation, without any reason, raided our airfields and cities along the western border and bombarded them. At the same time, German troops opened artillery fire in different places and crossed our border. In connection with the German attack on the Soviet Union, unheard of in its arrogance, I ORDER: 1. The troops, by all***

***means, fall upon the enemy forces and destroy them in areas where they violated the Soviet border.***

***2. Reconnaissance and combat aviation to establish locations concentration of enemy aircraft and the grouping of his ground forces.***

***Destroy aircraft at enemy airfields and bomb groupings of his ground forces with powerful strikes by bomber and attack aircraft. Air strikes should be carried out to the depth of German territory up to 100–150 km. Bomb Koenigsberg and Memel.***

***Do not make raids on the territory of Finland and Romania until special***

***instructions. [102]*** Neither the form nor the content of Directive No. 2 is statutory. “Unheard of impudence”, “without any reason” - this is not how combat orders are written. There is a standard, and it must be followed. This standard is set not by someone's literary tastes, but by Art. 90 of the Field Manual PU-39 (***“The first paragraph of the order gives a concise description of the actions and the general grouping of the enemy ... The second paragraph indicates the tasks of the neighbors and the borders with them. The third paragraph gives the formulation of the task of the connection and the decision of the commander giving the order ... ”***).

From the standpoint of these statutory requirements, Directive No. 2 is nothing more than an emotional outcry. But this is not a cry of despair! Rather, the thunderous roar

This is how our “collective Stalin” spent the day on June 22, 1941. It was the day of the demonstrations. Stalin demonstrated in front of his “neighbor

all around" indignation of offended innocence. He demonstrated to those with whom he spent dozens of hours over the operational maps of the planned invasion of Europe, who knew for sure that Hitler's "unheard-of impudence" attack only outstripped Stalin's attack. The generals and marshals demonstrated cheerful optimism, subtly hinted that all brilliant predictions had come true (***"the available data received actual confirmation ... the enemy brought only 30% of the forces concentrated to the front into battle ..."***), and promised to correct the incident in the next three days (to transfer hostilities to the territory of the enemy). **Defense plan and**

**cover plan** In reality, there was no

reason for optimism at all. There were few troops near the border, and they did not have a plan for a defensive operation adequate to the situation. The last statement needs a little more detailed consideration.

The Red Army did not have a plan to repel a surprise attack - because it could never be. The mobilization army, in principle, is not capable of immediate entry into battle (the total duration of the mobilization process was 30–35 days; mobilization, concentration and deployment of the bulk of combat units required, depending on their combat readiness in peacetime and location, 5–10 days). With the same success, you can ask - did the People's Commissariat of Armaments have a project for a perpetual tank engine, and who (Stalin or traitor generals) is to blame for the fact that there was no such project ... But in order to prevent the enemy's attack from being for the army and the country staggering "suddenness", the top military-political leadership must do a large amount of diverse work. Constant and reliable reconnaissance of the intentions and actions of a potential enemy is only

one of (and not the most important) components. First of all, it is necessary to build such a foreign policy of the state, such economic, diplomatic, military relations with neighbors, in which the question of an attack does not arise at all. In the specific conditions of 1939-1941, this meant that if Stalin had not become interested in petty looting, but had achieved mutual understanding with Finland, Poland and Romania, then Germany's "sudden attack" on the USSR would have become completely impossible. However, even after Stalin, together with Hitler, destroyed the Polish "separation barrier", it was still possible to significantly

reduce the likelihood and negative consequences of a "surprise attack", and not a single country in the world had such opportunities as the Stalinist USSR had. Such was our geography. This is a retreat for Poland



250 km from the border with Germany meant the loss of Warsaw; for France, a retreat of 200 km from the Belgian border meant the loss of Paris; The Soviet Union could afford to use 200-300 km of the western regions as a huge "field" of the main line of defense [31].

There was no need to drive the troops into the trap of the Bialystok and Lvov "protrusions"; taking into account natural river barriers, one of the possible defensive lines could be created along the Neman, Shchara, Styr, Seret rivers, i.e., along the line Grodno, Slonim, Pinsk, Lutsk, Ternopil, Chernivtsi. To the west of this line there was not a single industrial or agricultural region of any significance, the temporary loss of which could weaken the country's defense potential; for interwar Poland (the 2nd Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) it was a backward abandoned outskirts, for the Soviet Union it was a "problematic" region not yet developed either politically or economically. On its territory it was possible (necessary) to keep only small, but at the same time fully staffed according to the states of wartime, cover units, which, with the outbreak of hostilities, would have the task of moving to mobile defense [32] and, moving east from line to line, destroy roads, bridges and crossings behind them. With this scenario, the Wehrmacht would not have been able to reach the main line of defense of the Red Army earlier than on the 5-7th day of the offensive, and the question of a "surprise attack" would have been finally removed.

Has it been possible to find at least one document related to such a strategic defense plan in the 70 post-war years? No. Is it possible to detect traces of something similar in the real practical actions of the "collective Stalin", in the deployment of troops, in the tasks assigned to them? No.

Everything happened exactly the opposite. The defensive structures of the "Molotov Line" were built directly in the border zone. The troops of the western districts, already in peacetime, were concentrated on the territory of the "protrusions", and those formations that had not yet managed to fall into the trap advanced to the border in the last pre-war days. Particularly impressive is the map of the deployment of the main striking force of the Red Army, the mechanized corps (here it is also necessary to take into account that the diagram shows exactly the pre-war deployment, and with the start of deployment, everything began to move

westward). (Fig. 5.) ***"I consider it my duty to report on some issues related to the defense of the western border of the USSR on the territory of the Western OVO ... The outline of the border is very beneficial to the enemy and extremely disadvantageous to us ... creates the conditions for enveloping***

***the sides of the Germans would immediately cut the rear of the 3rd and 4th armies, and with great success, the entire 10th army would be cut off ... All these provisions were reported and worked out in more detail in the General Staff, they agreed with all this, but there were no real measures been undertaken. In addition, assignments were always given to work out options for an offensive operation with a***

***clear discrepancy between real forces ...***  " [103] On July 19, 1941, such a memorandum was submitted by the former PMC of the Western Front, Corps Commissar Fominykh, to the head of the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army, comrade. Mekhlis. The commander of the Western Front, Pavlov, and the chief of staff of the front, Klimovskikh, had already been arrested at that time and were awaiting trial, the verdict of which was beyond doubt; the life of Commissar Fomins himself hung on a thin thread - that is why one should not be surprised at the intonations of "naive amazement" with which he describes the deployment of the district troops, the "inaction" of the General Staff and the constant tasks "to work out options for an offensive operation. " Mekhlis in the last pre-war year was People's Commissar of State Control, had no access to the development of strategic plans [33], and Fominykh did not aggravate his situation by divulging the most important military secret of t



Rice. 5. Deployment of mechanized corps (the size of the icon is proportional to the number of tanks)

I understand the indignation that by this page should already overwhelm the well-read reader: "How was it that there were no defense plans? But what about the cover plans developed in each district? The question, despite the presence of an obvious answer, deserves discussion, because this topic is thoroughly obscured by the many years of efforts of falsifiers of history (without quotes). The operation

**"covering the**

**mobilization, concentration and deployment of troops" (this is how it was called in the Directives of the People's Commissar of Defense received in early May 1941 by the commanders of the Western**

border districts) and a strategic defensive operation are different operations. They differ in name, in tasks, in terms of time, and, what is most important in this case, in terms of the scale of forces and means involved.

The operation of covering the mobilization, concentration and deployment of troops is always carried out, with the beginning of each deployment, regardless of its (deployment) tasks and the possible (expected, assumed, most probable) reaction of the enemy. Accordingly, the cover plan was an integral part of the general list of documents of the operational war plan, and such an order was directly prescribed by the relevant directive documents.

**[104]** An exact analogue of this is the armed guard, which every day and every night steps in to guard a military camp - even if this town is located in the Siberian taiga, thousands of miles away from the nearest potential enemy. One of the characteristic examples is the April (1941) Directive of the People's Commissar of Defense

mentioned in the previous chapter on the development of a plan for the operational deployment of the troops of the Western OVO. Let me remind you that the left (southern) flank of the front as part of the 13th and 4th Armies was to advance on Warsaw and Lublin, the center and right flank had the task of defending. So, the Directive of the People's Commissar ordered to develop: "a cover and defense plan for the entire period of concentration; a plan for the concentration and deployment of front troops; plan for the implementation of the first operation of the 13th and 4th armies and the plan of defense of the 3rd and 10th armies. As you can see, the compilers (and executors) of the Directive quite clearly distinguish between the concepts of "cover plan" and "defense plan". The cover

operation has a strictly limited time frame. In accordance with the directives of the Soviet command, the operation began on the first day of mobilization (in the documents it was designated as "M-1") [34] and lasted 15 days (until "M-15"); after that, the troops that completed their concentration and deployment proceeded to carry out the main (offensive) operation for the troops of the Southwestern and left flank of the Western Front.

A cover operation is always defensive in its tasks, but this is in no way connected with the nature and goals of the main operation, in the interests of which the mobilization, concentration and deployment of troops is carried out. The need to cover the deployment was also assumed at the stage of preparation for offensive operations. So,

in terms of the defeat of Finland ("Considerations on the deployment of the armed forces of the Red Army in the event of a war with Finland") of September 18, 1940, decisive and unambiguous tasks (**"strike**

***the main forces of the Northwestern Front to invade central Finland, defeat the main forces of the Finnish army here and capture the central part of Finland; this strike should be combined with an attack on Helsinki from the side of the Hanko Peninsula "***) is preceded by an order to provide ***"a strong cover for our borders during the period of concentration***

***of troops" . [105]*** On the eve of the entry of Soviet troops into Iran, i.e., an unambiguously offensive operation, and against an enemy whose resistance was considered unlikely, Stavka Directive No. 001196 set the following tasks for the troops of the Central Asian Military District : ***to secure the border with Iran, preventing the enemy from breaking into our territory*** (emphasis added by me. - *M.S.* ) . ***Pay special attention to the directions ... At the end of the concentration of the main forces of the army on the morning of August 27, 1941, cross the border of Iran and take it by September 1, 1941 ... In the future, be ready for an attack on Tehran. In case of armed resistance on the part of the Iranian troops, destroy the troops and materiel of the enemy, preventing them from withdrawing to Tehran."*** [106]

The need to cover the process of concentration and deployment (and the setting of defensive tasks resulting from this) is also reflected in the documents of the German command - and this despite the fact that the offensive nature of the operation "Barbarossa" has not yet been in doubt. Just as in the Red Army, there was no single general cover plan (PP) for the entire Wehrmacht grouping concentrated near the border, and the necessary plans and orders were drawn up at the level of armies,

corps and divisions. The first references to the "Bert Plan" were found in the documents of the 6th Army (GA "South"), and they refer to April 23, 1941. In the documents of the 8th Army Corps (9th Army, GA "Center"), the "plan Berta" appears on May 6, 1941. [107] In the following days, more and more documents on

this subject become available. So, in the 4th Army of the Wehrmacht (the largest in the entire grouping, deployed near the southern contour of the "Bialystok ledge" with the task of attacking through Brest, Baranovichi to Minsk and Bobruisk), on June 5, signed by the Chief of Staff of the Army, Major General Blumentrit, Directive No. 0355/41 "Regarding Operation Attention, Berta." The alleged actions of the enemy were described as follows: ***"According to matching data, the Russians continue to push their troops into the border zone. Despite the strengthening of Russian formations located near the border, an attack seems unlikely. If it happens, then we should expect a surprise attack by the Russians from***

***the use of the Air Force, parachute landings and landings on gliders.*** After that, the task of their own troops was formulated: ***"In this regard, by order of the High Command of the Ground Forces, all measures must be taken to unconditionally cover the border strip and, above all, army warehouses ... The corps of the 4th Army are defending on the German-Russian border and an immediate counterattack throws the invading enemy back ... "***

June 15, 1941, signed by the commander of the 4th Army, General Field Marshal von Kluge, issued order No. 0450/41 ***"On measures against a possible Russian offensive."*** The assessment of the situation became more alarming: ***"The general situation, our own preparations and the growing tension [in connection with this] do not allow us to consider it impossible that the Russians, having aviation in the first echelon (as well as parachute troops), and partly ground attacks and surprise sabotage will be able to interfere with our preparations and disrupt the deployment. In this, nevertheless, possible case, the enemy's offensive efforts will be directed, first of all, against large bridges across the Vistula, Bug, Narew, as well as against supply depots. The alleged attacks can be carried out not only during the day, but primarily at night. [108]"***

Next came specific instructions to the army formations, set out on four pages of typescript. Particular concern, as can be seen from the document, was associated with possible sabotage and / or airborne assault on strategically important for the deployment of the Wehrmacht

bridges.

Closest to unraveling the intentions of the Soviet command came the command of the 1st Tank Group (GA "South"), which on June 16 finally thought about the threat posed by the presence of two protrusions of the border facing west. (Fig. 6.) However, this time too, the possibility of a preemptive strike by the Red Army is assessed as very doubtful: ***"The advance of the Russian [troops] in our direction suggests that an attack is being prepared on us. We can assume an offensive [of the enemy] from the region of two ledges west of Lvov and Bialystok with a front [in the direction] towards the San and the Vistula. Although it seems unlikely that the Russians will be inclined to such a decision, nevertheless we must not miss anything here ... In the event of such a development of events, the mobile formations arriving [currently] must be constantly combat-ready. In this case, it is important to have combat-ready military units available as soon as possible. They must be able to come forward"***

***mobile formations of the enemy on the main roads, especially on the road Lviv - Przemyśl ... " [109]***

It is noteworthy that if in many other documents it is allowed to open fire on Soviet aircraft only in the case ***“when their intention to attack with airborne weapons or bombs is clearly visible”***, then in the order for the 1st TGr dated June 16 it is allowed ***“to open fire on all unambiguously identified enemy aircraft 5 km west of the border.***





and intelligence. Secondly, the alleged actions of the enemy do not go beyond the scope of large-scale sabotage, airborne landings, and air raids; accordingly, the outfit of forces involved in the cover operation is very limited. For example, in the 28th Infantry Division (it was part of the above-mentioned 8 AK), a reinforced **reconnaissance** battalion and an anti-tank battalion were allocated, in accordance with the plan, **"further retreat in front of superior enemy forces in the area of the 7th and 49th infantry regiments."**

The command of the Red Army approached the planning of the cover operation incomparably more seriously. The troops of the western border districts were involved in the operation almost in full strength, and directly in the first echelon of cover, in a strip of 20–30 km from the border, it was supposed to deploy (in different districts) 50–60% of the total number of rifle divisions. [110] With such forces, and even taking into account the presence of border rivers and thousands of pillboxes of the "Molotov Line", it was possible to stop not only sabotage groups, but also an attempt to break through large enemy

formations. Further. The PP of all the western districts contained instructions on active, not limited by state borders, aviation actions: **"By powerful strikes against the main groupings of troops, railway junctions, bridges and stages, disrupt and delay the concentration and deployment of enemy troops."** And these words were not an unfounded declaration - the air strike on the enemy's transport network was worked out in detail.

Thus, in the PP of the Western OVO, the calculation of the detachment of aviation forces (diving and so-called "horizontal" bombers separately) takes up three pages of text; specific instructions were given on the height of the bombing, the types of bombs used, the necessary (according to the compilers of the document) number of links and hits (in particular, the railway junction in Allenstein - 60 links, 170 hits, the railway junction in Warsaw - 60 links, 80 hits, Torun - 40 links, 70 hits, in total it was supposed to use 320 links, that is, almost a thousand bombers). [111] Moreover, active offensive actions

were supposed not only in the air, but also on the ground. In the Directives of the People's Commissar of Defense for the development of software for the western border districts, the task was set: **"Under favorable conditions, all defending troops and reserves of the armies and the district should be ready, at the direction of the High Command, to deliver swift strikes to defeat enemy groups, transfer combat operations to its territory and capture advantageous frontiers."** [112] Thus, a defensive (in theory) cover operation

mobilization, concentration and deployment of troops gradually **developed into the first phase of the main offensive operation.**

Of course, the decision to start such an "active defense" was reserved by the top military-political leadership, any initiative - even at the level of district commanders in general ranks - was categorically excluded. ***"The cover plan is put into effect upon receipt of an encrypted telegram for mine, a member of the Main Military Council, Chief of the General Staff with the following signatures: "Proceed to implement the 1941 cover plan."*** [113] This standard phrase ended all the Directives for the development of a cover plan sent by the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR to the military districts. The commanders of armies, corps and divisions did not even have the right to open the "red package" on their own initiative, which contained instructions for actions in the cover operation, including Order No. 1 prepared in advance [35]. Returning to the comparison of the cover operation with the armed guards of the

military camp, we must note the fundamental difference in the order of putting into effect the PP (as it was understood in the Red Army) and the Charter of the guard service. Every soldier knows (and he is tirelessly reminded every time he goes on duty) that in the event of an attack on a guarded object, the sentry has the right and is obliged to independently decide on the use of weapons. Only after the attack is repelled, the attackers are destroyed or detained, can one start writing a memorandum for the higher authorities, who, in turn, will report even higher in authority, and so an alarming wave will come to Moscow. The procedure for putting the PP into effect was envisaged to be exactly the opposite. There is no accident or error in this. It is simply necessary, finally, to understand and admit that the cover plan was by no

means a "plan to repel aggression" - it is a plan for active armed support for the deployment of the Red Army; such a deployment that begins before the deployment of the enemy and ends with a devastating first blow against the German troops. If such a conclusion still needs some additional confirmation, then they appeared in July 2009, after the declassification of a number of executive documents on the plan for covering the units of the 5th Army (Kiev District, hereinafter the South-Western Front; the list of documents was signed on June 4, 1941 Deputy Chief of Staff of the 5th Army, Lieutenant Colonel Davydov). [114] The declassified documents are the same Orders No. 1 that were in the "red packets" in the safe of the commander of each division. All orders start

standard phrase: ***“The enemy threatens the western border. By the decision of the Soviet government and the Party, cover units are being moved to the state border.*** And not a single word about the war that began with the attack of the enemy!

The order in which the cover plan was put into action (“from top to bottom”, by order from Moscow, and not in response to the German invasion) was an important, but not the only aspect that made the PP practically useless in a situation of surprise attack. The second consisted in the procedure (method, tactics) established by the PP for solving the defensive task: ***“To repel the enemy offensive and to ensure the mobilization, concentration and deployment of the district troops by stubborn defense along the state border line and the line of fortified areas being created.”*** It was this phrase, without the slightest variation, that was present in the PP of each of the western districts. In this case, the

combination of the words "stubborn defense" is a military term, not the adjective "stubborn" next to the noun "defense". Translated from a specific military language into newspapers, the term “stubborn defense” means “Not a step back! Stand to death!” In the specific situation of June 1941, this meant: a ban on the withdrawal of troops from the trap of the Bialystok and Lvov "ledges", a hopeless attempt to defend the border, "the ***outline of which is very beneficial to the enemy and extremely disadvantageous to us.***" By the way, in the situation of a real enemy attack, I had to understand all this very quickly: already on the fourth day of the war, at 15.40 on June 25, the command of the Western Front gives the order to withdraw all armies to the line of the river. Shchara (to the Lida, Slonim, Pinsk line), on June 26 the command of the Southwestern Front allowed the withdrawal of the 6th Army from the Lvov ledge to the Pochaev, Zolochiv line (75 km east of Lvov). [115] Vladimirsky (on

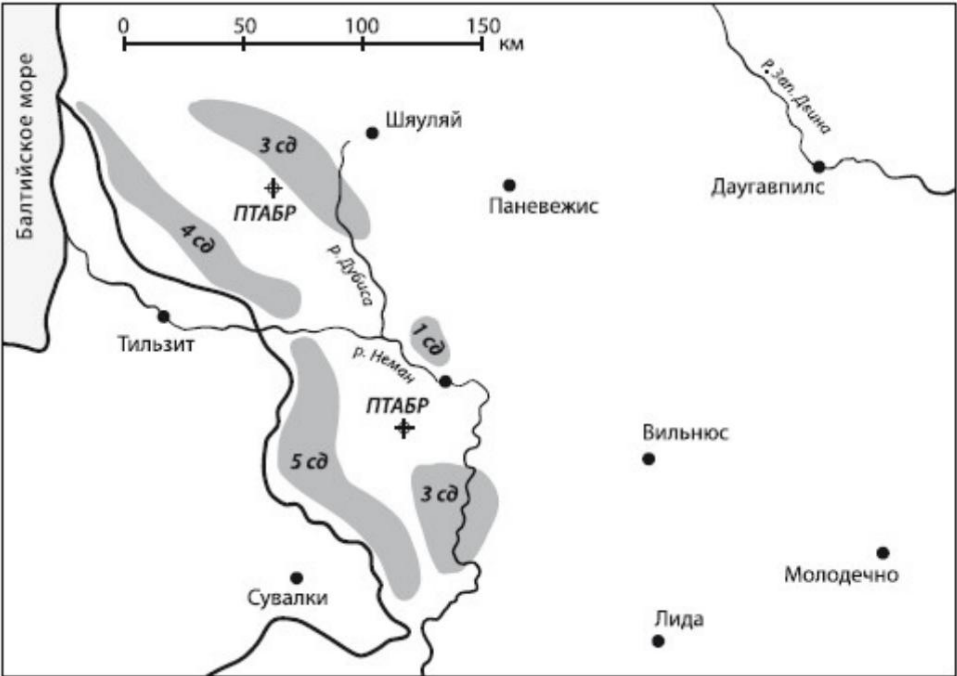
the eve of the war - deputy chief of the operational department of the headquarters of the 5th Army of the Kiev OVO) is perplexed and indignant: ***“The cover plan provided for only one option for deploying army troops - on the border defensive line. The possibility of an enemy attack was not taken into account at all*** (highlighted by me. - M.S. ) ***before this line was occupied by our troops, in this case, reserve lines in depth and possible options for deploying army troops on them were not provided and prepared.*** [143]

Was the decision to “provide the deployment of troops with stubborn defense along the state border line” a mistake? No. The mistake (at best) is the stubborn unwillingness to see the difference between the PP and the reflection plan

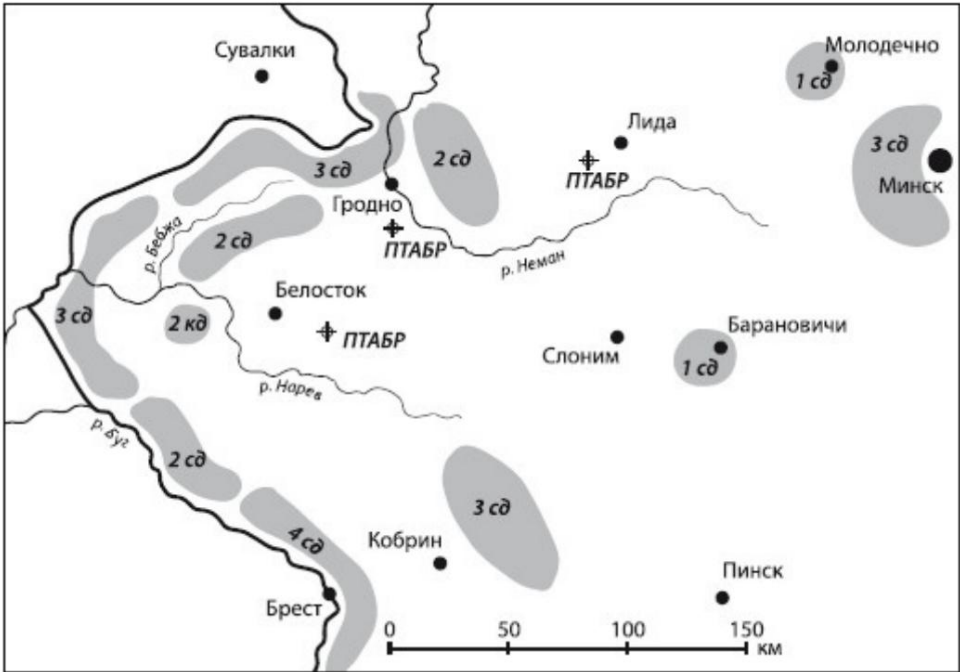
aggression. The PP, being part of the general operational plan, could not but be subordinated to the solution of the main tasks. And if the main task was the attack on Warsaw, Lublin and Krakow, then the main strike force was inevitably concentrated in the border zone; only there it could (should) have been covered. Within the framework of the general offensive plan of the Red Army, another PP, which, for example, assumes defense along the eastern bank of the Dnieper, cannot even be invented theoretically.

The last and most important difference between the PP and the plan for repelling aggression is the composition of the cover group. A cover operation is always carried out by only a part of the force. This is inevitable - just as it is inevitable that only a small part of the personnel of a guarded military camp will be sent to guard duty, as it is inevitable that only a small part of the doctors and nurses available in the city will participate in the work of the ambulance service. And now let's move on from metaphors to specific numbers and cards. (Fig. 7, 8, 9)

The diagrams show the grouping of troops of the border districts in cover, and not on the first day (M-1) of the cover operation, but on one of the last (the first echelons of the cover troops completed their concentration in the areas indicated in the BCP on M-3 / M-4, the second echelons were concentrated in the period from M-3 to M-13). What do we see? In total, in the border zone from the Baltic coast to Bessarabia, in the first echelon of cover (taking into account the units of the ZapOVO on the eastern bank of the Biebrzh River) there are 40 rifle and 3 cavalry divisions [36]. We emphasize once again that "so many" of them will only be towards M-3 / M-4. If we calculate quite strictly, that is, without taking into account the so-called. "deep divisions", which on the first day of the war were not near the border, and without taking into account 7 divisions on the southern edge of the "Lviv ledge" (where the Germans did not conduct offensive operations in the first days of the war), it turns out that 29 rifle and 3 cavalry divisions. A total of 30.5 "estimated divisions".

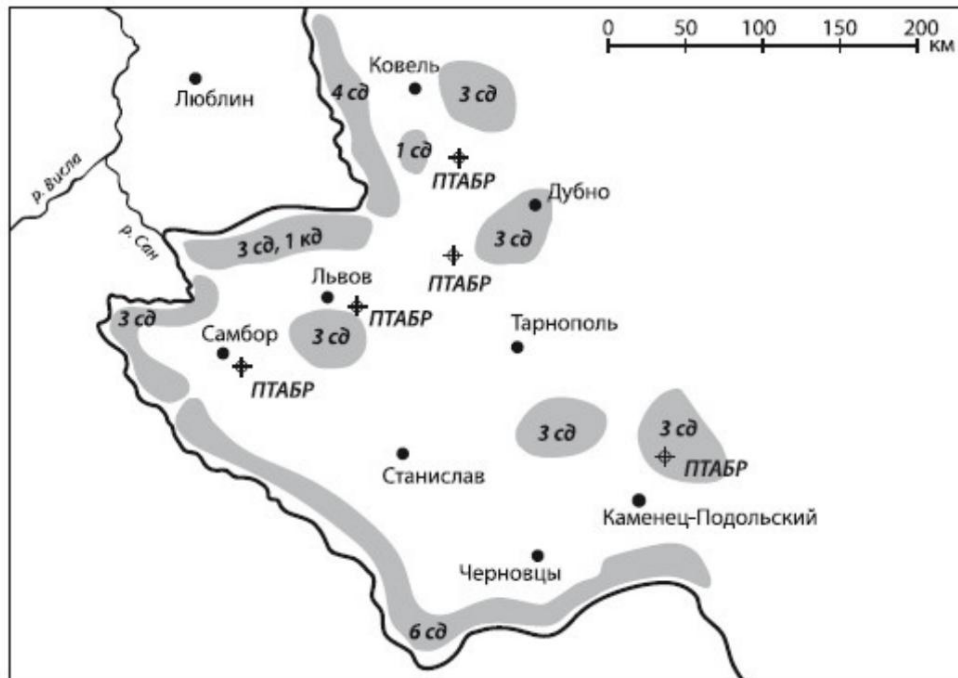


Rice. 7. Deployment of troops according to the cover plan. Baltic OVO



Rice. 8.

Deployment of troops according to the cover plan. Western OVO



Rice. 9.

Deployment of troops according to the cover plan. Kiev Regional

Military District What tasks can be solved by such forces? In accordance with paragraph 105 of the Field Manual PU-39, a rifle division can conduct a stubborn defense on a front of 8–12 km. During the defense in the zone of the fortified area, it was considered possible to double the width of the front, i.e., up to 20-25 km maximum. In fact, one division of the first echelon accounted for 35-40 km of the border. But even these “average for the hospital” figures do not reflect the entire tragedy of the situation: parts of the cover were stretched along the border in an almost uniform “chain”, while the Germans advanced, massaging forces in narrow breakthrough lanes. So, on the 45-km front of defense of the 128th Infantry Division (the southern flank of the North-Western Front), on June 22, 3 tank and 2 infantry divisions of the Wehrmacht crossed the border. What was it? Mistake, stupidity, crime, "conspiracy of the generals"? Not

at all. The PPs were quite real - if used for their intended purpose, that is, in the case of the timely introduction of the cover plan into action. Timely for such a PP could only be the time **before the start of the deployment of the enemy army**. For example, let's imagine a situation in which “M-day” became May 22, 1941 (this day is notable because it was then that the German railways were switched to the regime of maximum military transportation and a large-scale redeployment of German troops to the east began).

On the morning of May 22, a cover plan is put into effect and formations of the first echelon in an organized manner (not under enemy bombs) occupy the defense lines indicated by him, which takes 6–12 hours according to the PP [37]. What

can the enemy oppose this? Directly in the border zone, the Germans on May 22 had no troops at all (not counting the border guards). About 45 infantry divisions are scattered at a depth of 100 km from the border to the Vistula; only to get to the border, they need 3-4 days. More time is needed to assess the situation, to identify the fact that mobilization has begun in the border districts of the USSR, to make some kind of decision.

Even if this decision is a desperate attempt to throw all available forces on the offensive, without waiting for the concentration of the grouping provided for by the Barbarossa plan, then the ratio of the number of divisions to the west and east of the border will be about 1.5 to 1. Plus the border rivers, the bridges on which are already successfully detonated. Plus a thousand bunkers. Plus, the "deep" rifle divisions that approached the border on the M-5 (we don't even remember about 14 mechanized corps). Plus, powerful strikes by Soviet aviation **"on the main groupings of troops, railway junctions, bridges and stages."** And the task of the "Eastern" is already becoming quite real ... **Intelligence** What prevented the timely (in the above understanding of the word "timely") start of mobilization and the introduction of cover plans? The answer to this question is extremely simple: the top military-political leadership of the USSR had no

idea about

the real plans of the enemy, much less about the specific date for the start of Operation Barbarossa. That's the whole clue. Yes, everything is much more interesting on the pages of the works of Soviet historians and propagandists. Some of the stories invented by historians are absolutely remarkable. So, for example, in 1995, under the auspices of the FSB and the Foreign Intelligence Service, a collection of documents was published under the stunning title "Hitler's Secrets on Stalin's Table." Number one was a report marked "top secret"... about the press conference of the British ambassador in Moscow, S. Krips. The next "Hitler's secret" was the report of the NKGB of the USSR **"on the responses in the circles of the diplomatic corps on**

**the issue of concluding a treaty between the USSR and Yugoslavia."** [116] In recent years, books of this sort have gone down the drain. Detailed lists were compiled: "forty warnings, forty irrefutable warnings ...". As one of the "irrefutable" reports of the border guards that the Polish village women from the western bank of the Bug shouted: "Russians! Beware! The Germans will soon attack you..." As a wonderful French proverb says, "even the most beautiful girl cannot give more than she has". Content and

intelligence",

"one hundred

The reliability of the reports of the Soviet (as well as any other) intelligence services was determined primarily and mainly by the presence of "sources", i.e., recruited carriers of classified information. All the rest, all these mysterious Stirlitz and Ket radio operators, could only transmit information received from the "sources" to Moscow with greater or lesser distortion and delay; broadcast, but not generate it. In the context of the "mystery of June 22", there is not the slightest sense in discussing forty or one hundred and forty messages received from eternally hungry journalists, corrupt deputies, traveling salesmen and the wife of the German ambassador - such "sources" did not even have the slightest access to documents of the highest military-political leadership Germany. What could they have to say other than a variety of gossip, including German intelligence disinformation deliberately spread in such an environment? As for the German generals and officers recruited by Soviet

intelligence, their list will not take us much space. This is one single person, Lieutenant Haro Schulze-Boysen, an employee of the intelligence department of the Luftwaffe headquarters [38]. The senior lieutenant tried his best, but due to his official position, he was too far from those offices in which decisions were made; in fact, he collected and transmitted to Soviet intelligence the rumors circulating in the corridors of the Luftwaffe headquarters. Sometimes (especially in purely aviation matters) these rumors reflected real events, no less often Schulze-Boysen became the "source" through which the disinformation of the German intelligence services poured into Moscow.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the "nightingales of the FSB" started up and proudly informed the gullible public that they had previously fooled her with stories about the fateful messages of Richard Sorge ("you understand, comrades, the time was not easy, and not everything could be spoken directly ...") , but now they remembered and will tell the Pure Truth. It turns out that there was a competent "source", and there was a reliable message about the date of the beginning of "Barbarossa". On June 19, 1941, a Gestapo officer, Hauptsturmführer Willy Lehman (undercover pseudonym "Breitenbach") met with a representative of Soviet intelligence and told him that the war would begin on June 22 at 3 o'clock in the morning. The smallest details were given to the public: where the meeting took place, what prearranged signals were used, how Leman was dressed that day ("tired, in a stale shirt"), etc. Nevertheless, questions remain. The first question is how did Leman himself know all this? Tortured to death an army colonel? There is a simple and unshakable rule: secret information is disclosed only



those who need it for the performance of official duties, and only to the extent necessary for the performance of duties. Gestapo Hauptsturmführer (this rank corresponds to a captain in the Wehrmacht) V. Lehman was engaged in counterintelligence support for defense industry enterprises; in other words, he made sure that nothing was blown up at the military plant and a secret drawing was not carried through the checkpoint, his "invisible front" lay hundreds of kilometers from the Bug and the Neman. Why, for what purpose does he need information about the day (especially about the hour!) of the start of the offensive on the Eastern Front? Further more

interesting. It turns out that there is no encryption with Leman's message in any Russian archive. Do you know why? ***"It was sent through Ambassador Dekanozov through the NKID, aroused Beria's indignation (what did Beria have to do with the NKID, which was led by Molotov, Stalin's nominal deputy and in fact the second person in the country's leadership?) And was lost somewhere either in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or in Beria's papers"***. A curtain. I can't say anything about Beria's papers, but I had to work in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; I testify that there are even papers with a schedule of a meeting of the ambassador of a third-rate Asian country 70 years ago, and the only documentary evidence of the success of Soviet intelligence was "lost"? There are also no documentary traces of V. Leman's message in the military archives (let's be more careful - no one considered it necessary to find them). After that, one should no longer be surprised at the stories that on April 25, 1941, Breitenbach informed Soviet intelligence about the impending invasion of Yugoslavia (which invasion took place on April 6), and "in 1935 he was personally present at the test of the ***first German missile on V-1 liquid fuel at the Peenemünde***

***test site...***" [39]. And now let's turn to real facts and real dates. From December 1940 to March-April 1941, the development of the Barbarossa plan took place in a very narrow circle (one or two dozen people) of the top military-political leadership of Germany. Penetrating into it is a fabulous dream of a scout, and one should not be surprised (even more so - indignant) that our Stirlitz failed to perform such a miracle. By May 1, the plan was finally formed, the date for the start of the operation was set - June 22, 1941 [117] From that moment on, the circle of those admitted to information about the Barbarossa began to slowly but steadily expand. Some (by no means claiming to be a final diagnosis) idea of this process is given by the documents of the Wehrmacht units, the translations of which are presented on my website. [118] The earliest known date is 4 May. On this day, the command of the 48th

The tank corps [40] receives ***"Instructions for reaching the starting lines according to the plan" Barbarossa "(Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa)"***. Two days later, at the headquarters of the corps, ***"an order for reconnaissance was prepared, which contained the first reconnaissance tasks for divisions, artillery and sapper headquarters."*** [119] Of course, instructions for reaching the initial lines are not yet a plan of operation; even more so,

there is no talk of a specific date for the start of the offensive. In the period from the end of May to June 10–13, 1941, numerous documents of corps and divisions note the appearance of an “offensive order” and holding meetings with subordinate commanders of regiments and individual battalions. Taken together, this means that the invasion plan (as far as they are concerned) has already become known to about a thousand Wehrmacht officers. They still do not know the exact date of the start of Barbarossa, but the very fact that tactical level commanders were familiarized with such information clearly indicates that the attack was planned not for 1942–1943 and subsequent years (“after the victory over England”), but for coming weeks or even days.

From mid-June, the circle of persons admitted to the most important military secret of the “Third Reich” begins to expand - information about the day the operation began. On June 10, the High Command of the Wehrmacht informs the headquarters of the armies and Army Groups directly subordinate to it. [120] Three Groups, seven armies, in each of them - the commander, chief of staff, chief of the operational department of the headquarters, plus generals and field marshals of the central apparatus of the Wehrmacht; it's already about fifty people. On June 15, the following entry appears in the Combat Action Log of the 3rd Panzer Division (2nd Panzer Group): ***“ The division commander, the heads of the operational and rear departments, the commanders of the breakthrough groups and sapper battalions take part in the command and staff game at the headquarters of the 24th Tank Corps, during which the upcoming operation is played out in all details ... June 16 is declared the day "B minus 6".*** [121] In the next three days, entries of similar content appear

in the documents of many other compounds. Thus, by June 17-19, the exact date of the beginning of the invasion is already known to the commanders of corps, divisions and regiments, the heads of the corresponding headquarters and departments; by the most conservative estimate - about a thousand people. **There is not a single documentary evidence that Soviet intelligence was able to reveal this fact**. Yes, one could put it more carefully: “at the moment, no one has published the relevant documents,” but such delicacy seems to me to be unnecessary. There would be something to publish - com

"Hitler's secrets on Stalin's table" would not deny themselves the pleasure of supplementing the press conference reports with something more significant ... **Covert**

**deployment** The unfortunate failure of Soviet intelligence ("Hitler's attack was overslept") does not at all mean that in the early summer of 1941 Mr. "collective Stalin" plunged into a peaceful sleep. Nothing like that, the work was in full swing. From the end of May 1941, the Red Army passed into a special, unusual state that did not correspond to peacetime standards. Operational summary of the General Staff No. 01 without further ado calls this "deployment" ("The *enemy, having preempted our troops in deployment, forced the Red Army units ...* "). Victor Suvorov was the first to draw attention to this circumstance a quarter of a century ago, then some "status" Russian historians (in particular, P. Bobylev and M. Meltyukhov) joined the opinion that the Red Army was in a state of strategic deployment. On the other hand, many experts express a reasonable judgment that strategic deployment in isolation from mobilization is impossible in principle, therefore it is more correct to speak not of "deployment", but of holding "large-scale pre-mobilization measures" in May-June 1941. The personal opinion of the author of this book comes down to the fact that I am

completely indifferent to what THIS should be called. It is more interesting and much more important to find out when IT started and what they managed to do by June 22, 1941.

Answering the first question is not easy. Strictly speaking, the entire life of the Stalinist empire was one big, never-ending "mobilization event." The thesis about "the inevitability of a military clash between the world's first state of workers and peasants and the forces of decaying capitalism" was tightly hammered into the Bolshevik "creed". Every Soviet person knew (was obliged to know) that enemies, like hungry wolves, prowl the borders of the USSR. More specifically, one should agree with V. Suvorov, who refers the beginning of the deployment process to August 1939. From that moment, a sharp increase in the strength of the Armed Forces of the USSR began, as a result of which, by April "large-scale pre-mobilization measures" - the number of personnel (including the Navy and Air Force) approached the mark of 4.7 million people. No country in Europe and America had such a peacetime army, and only Nazi Germany had a larger wartime army. In accordance with the mobilization plan "MP-41" after the mobilization according to the "western option" (i.e. without full

mobilization of the Far Eastern and Southern Districts) the size of the Armed Forces was to be 7.85 million people. **[127]** In other words, in this war scenario, during open mobilization, "only" 3.2 million reservists were to be called up [41] (and this is really small against the background of the fact that in other European countries the size of the army after mobilization increased significantly). One quarter of this number (802 thousand people) were called up under the cover of "training camps" in May - June 1941. Ultimately, by June 22, there were about 5.7 million people in the Armed Forces, including in the ground forces - 5.1 million people (2692 thousand of them in the western border districts, 618 thousand in the armies and individual formations of the RGC). **[128]**

Arithmetically, with such a number of people it was possible to complete, to the last soldier, all 303 divisions of the Red Army, including formations stationed in the deepest rear. The reality of building up the Armed Forces is much more complicated. In addition to divisions, the Active Army also has corps, army and front-line units and subunits, and besides the Active Army, the Armed Forces have huge rear (training, medical, scientific and technical) structures, up to 30-40% of the total strength. Therefore, in fact, by the time the war began, the divisions of the western border districts had from 9 to 14 thousand people, in most cases - about 10-11 thousand. Clearly less staff. This is an indisputable fact. It can be assessed in different ways. Traditional Soviet historiography (though without directly warning readers about this) assessed

the situation in terms of a fistfight or a battle between two primitive tribes: if tribe A fielded 160 men with clubs, and tribe B - only 120 with the same clubs, then A has an obvious numerical superiority that makes the defeat of B inevitable. We will not rush to conclusions and arm ourselves (fortunately, primitive times have passed) not with a club, but with a calculator.

In order for an artillery piece to be able to conduct aimed fire, two people are absolutely necessary: the commander of the crew and the gunner. A third one is highly desirable - a loader (so that the first two are not distracted from observing the battlefield and the target). Those to whom such a statement seems controversial can look at any photograph of any tank of the 2nd MV period. There are 2, sometimes 3 people in the tank turret, while the 76-mm (and by the end of the war, 85-mm) gun shoots, shoots and shoots. In the tower of the Soviet giant KV-2, as many as a 152-mm howitzer was installed, with which 3 people were controlled (the fourth was the tank commander, busy with his duties). However, the 76-mm calculation established by the staffing table in April 19

divisional cannon consists of 6 people, the calculation of the 122-mm divisional howitzer consists of 9 people, 152-mm howitzers - 10 people.

Let's go further. To fully staff the crews of all guns of an artillery regiment of a rifle division (8 122-mm howitzers and 16 76-mm guns), only 168 people are required. And according to the staffing table in April 1941, this regiment should have 1038 people. Of the six soldiers of the artillery regiment, only one is near the guns. What is everyone else doing?

A smaller part performs the most important work that requires high qualifications and long-term training: they provide control and communications, reconnaissance, correct fire, and prepare calculated data for firing.

Quantitatively, most of the fighters perform work that does not require high qualifications: rides, digs, drags, unloads, washes and feeds horses, washes and feeds people, reads political information to them, receives and gives out letters and monetary allowances ... These are the people who are definitely needed and not superfluous at all - and they call on the agenda from the military registration and enlistment office, and in June 41, during the "first wave" of open mobilization, they called not yesterday's schoolchildren (a favorite plot of Soviet "engineers of human souls"), but reservists, *i.e.* men who served "urgent" and received the necessary set of military knowledge and skills. The same

proportions are observed in any other parts and connections. There are 9.5 thousand people in the three rifle regiments of the rifle division in the state, of which only 4.5 thousand shoot at the enemy directly from rifles and machine guns (this number also includes the "second numbers" of machine gun crews). In a tank division, out of every seven people, there is only one inside the tank, and so on. These figures (probably strange for a person far from military affairs) explain the empirically observed fact that at the final stage of the war, in 1944-1945 successfully started the operation, having in the best (!) Case 7-8 thousand people; it was in such numbers that the Red Army triumphantly reached Berlin and Prague. It would be quite appropriate to compare a

division of the Red Army, which is in a state of mobilization deployment, with a thin person. This is a completely living person, with arms, legs, eyes and a head. Yes, he is not able to do the work day after day that a well-fed strong man can handle, yes, he needs a sanatorium with enhanced nutrition - but in case of extreme need (for example, when your own house is on fire), you can work for a couple of hours, and without waiting for the resort. In the same way, if there is a desire, a division can fight for several days in a 10,000 strong, with unwashed horses, idle

field mail, without the "red corner", the field cash desk of the State Bank, and even - in war as in war - without a kitchen with hot

food. Worse - but by no means hopeless - was the situation with the staffing of the army with equipment: cars and tractors (artillery tractors). As of June 15, 1941 (that is, even before the start of open mobilization!) There were 272,000 vehicles (of all types) and 42,900 tractors (tractors) in the Red Army. [129] If we compare these figures with those calculated according to MP-41 (respectively, 595 and 90.8), then the absence of half of the required amount is revealed. And this is definitely bad. If we compare with the staffing of 110 rifle divisions, 20 mechanized corps and 10 PTABRs, which were part of the five western border districts, then the **available amount is 2 times more than required for tractors and 1.6 times more for cars**. And this, mind you, is according to those staffing standards, when in a howitzer regiment of an ordinary rifle division there are two tractors per gun. Thus, the problem was not the lack of people and equipment as such, but the lack of a certain number of

people and equipment at the right time in some places. As for the "time", there was some date unknown to us in the interval from mid-July to the end of August [42] on Stalin's calendar [42]. In any case, it had nothing to do with June 22, 1941. As for the "place", the large-scale redeployment of the Red Army troops began at the end of May 1941. It began and continued in a very unusual way - "back to front". First of all, the troops of the internal districts began to move, then the second echelons of the border districts. The line did not have time to reach the first echelon of the border districts - the war began.

On May 22, 1941, the loading into the echelons of the formations of the 16th Army and the 5th mechanized corps located in Transbaikalia and Mongolia began; taking into account the vast distance and the continuing schedule of work of the railways in peacetime, they were supposed to arrive in Ukraine, in the region of Berdichev, Proskurov,

Shepetovka, in the period from June 17 to July 10. Around the same time (it is not possible to give exact dates, since the process was covered with a veil of secrecy unprecedented even for the Soviet Union), it was decided to form four new armies based on the command and troops of the internal districts: the 19th (North Caucasian District), 20th (Orlovsky District), 21st (Volga District), 22nd (Ural District). In addition, the named armies included formations of the Moscow and Kharkov

military districts. Somewhat later, in mid-June, the 24th Army (Siberian District) and the 28th Army (Arkhangelsk District) were formed.

In total, the troops of seven armies, having plunged at night at abandoned stop-stations, in wagons boarded up with plywood shields, moved west. Where exactly - decisions about this have been clarified many times and radically changed after what happened on June 22. The initial decision (reflected in the Vatutin's "Information" of June 13 mentioned above) assumed that the 22nd Army was concentrated in the rear of the Western Front in the Vitebsk region; The 19th, 20th and 21st were concentrated in the depths of the Southwestern Front in the zone from Chernigov to Cherkasy. The 24th and 28th Armies were deployed, respectively, southwest and northwest of Moscow. The deadlines for the completion of all transportation (and this is about 3 thousand railway echelons) fell on July 3-10. [130] The troops of the

armies of the RGK (Second Strategic Echelon) not only began to concentrate before the First Echelon, but they and the reservists called up under the cover of "training camps" got more than the border districts. So, the certificate "On the holding of training camps for assigned staff in rifle divisions in 1941" compiled on May 20 by the Red Army's mobupravlenie gives the following figures: 134 thousand people are called up in four border districts, and 322 thousand people are called up in those internal districts that turned into the armies of the RGC [43] (here, however, it must be taken into account that the information on the Baltic OVO). [131] This made it possible, even in the course of "large-scale pre-mobilization measures", to bring the number of personnel of rifle divisions in the armies of the RGC to the regular (or close to it) level. On June 9, another meeting

of the top military-political leadership (the previous ones were held on June 3, 6 and 7), but completely record-breaking in duration (6 hours and 25 minutes in total), took place in Stalin's office. In addition to regular participants (Timoshenko, Zhukov, Vatutin, Malenkov), Marshals Voroshilov and Kulik, Air Force Commander-in-Chief Zhigarev, Head of the State Planning Commission Voznesensky, Head of the mobilization planning department of the KO under the Council of People's Commissars Safonov, People's Commissars of the Aviation and Tank Industry Shakhurin and Malyshev were summoned. The decision to start open mobilization, which was quite expected for such a meeting, was not adopted. But it was not in vain that they conferred that day.

On June 11, Vasilevsky personally writes on the letterhead of the People's Commissar of Defense the text of the directive for the commander of the Western OVO: ***"To increase the combat readiness of the district troops, withdraw all deep rifle divisions and command and control rifle corps with***

**to the camp in the areas provided for them by the cover plan [44] (NPO directive No. 503859). Leave the border divisions in place** (highlighted by me. - M.S. ), **bearing in mind that their withdrawal to the border in the areas assigned to them, if necessary, will be carried out according to special instructions ... The withdrawal of these troops should be completed by July 1, 1941.** [132] The next day, a similar directive was sent to the Kiev Regional Military

District. The directive sent to Kiev contained a direct instruction: **"Troop movements should be kept in complete secrecy. March to make with tactical exercises, at night.** [133] There were no such words in the "Minsk" directive, but extraordinary measures to maintain the strictest secrecy were taken there as well. The Journal of Combat Actions of the Western Front [45] describes the events of the last pre-war days as follows: **"The troops were pulled up to the border in accordance with the instructions of the General Staff of the Red Army. Written orders and instructions were not given to the corps and divisions. The division commanders received instructions orally** (emphasis mine. - M.S. ) **from the chief of staff of the district, Major General Klimovskikh. It was explained to the personnel that they were going to big exercises. The troops took with them all the training equipment (instruments, targets, etc.).** [134] It is noteworthy that reports on the progress of the advancement of "deep divisions" came from Minsk to Moscow in the format of operational reports, and their serial numbers in the middle of the year turned out to be 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 (number one could not be found in th

If the thesis that the Red Army was preparing to deliver a surprise first strike against the enemy still needs some additional arguments, then such an amazing order of deployment of troops can in itself serve as exhaustive evidence: in order to prepare to repel aggression, one should first of all mobilize and withdraw to combat positions the troops of the first echelon of the border districts, then the so-called. "deep divisions" and only after that - if fate gives such a chance - to engage in the mobilization and advancement to the west of the troops of the internal districts. In real June 1941, everything was done exactly the opposite. The passionate desire "not to frighten off Hitler ahead of time" completely took possession of the consciousness of "collective Stalin." Another (perhaps the most incredible of those that actually took place) manifestation of the desire "not to frighten away" was the preservation of the peacetime mode of operation of the railways. The Germans, as we remember, introduced a special regime of military transportation a month before the start of the invasion (May 22, 1941). During the deployment of the Red Army before the war with



dilapidated Poland, the railways of the European part of the USSR were transferred to a special mode of operation on September 12, 1939, five days before the start of the operation. [136] In June 1941, despite the huge volume of upcoming shipments, nothing of the kind was done. The regime of military transportation was introduced not on the 22nd, and not even on the 23rd, but only from 18-00 on June 24, on the third day of the war! [137]

### **The Last Days of Peace**

The protocols of interrogations of the commander of the Western Front, General of the Army D.G., have been preserved and are now declassified. Pavlova. Yes, of course, the reliability of his testimony can be challenged - the doomed general tried to present his actions in the best possible light. On the other hand, Marshal Timoshenko (who will be discussed by telephone below) was quite alive at the time of Pavlov's arrest and held the same high position, so it was, as they say, "more expensive for him" to slander him. So, according to Pavlov, at one in the morning on June 22, he reported to the people's commissar that **"for a day and a half, German motorized mechanized columns were continuously moving into the Suwalki ledge,"** and according to a report from the commander of the 3rd Army, **"in many places the Germans removed fence wire.** To which Marshal Timoshenko allegedly replied as follows: **"Be calm and don't panic, gather the headquarters just in case this morning, maybe something unpleasant will happen, but look, don't go for any provocation."** [122] Interesting wording. "Something unpleasant." Is it about the invasion of a 3 millionth army of a cruel enemy? It is hard not to notice that the people's commissar of defense either still doubts the inevitability of an attack, or is fooling his subordinate. For what? It would be possible to "bracket" the discussion of one such incident. But he is far from alone! The outgoing

documents of the People's Commissariat of Defense and the General Staff of the last peaceful days are shocking in their inadequacy. The scope of our book is not unlimited, but a few examples are worth mentioning.

On June 18, the People's Commissar of Defense signed Order No. 0039 "On the state of construction of operational airfields according to the main construction plan of 1941." [123] Four days before the start of the enemy invasion, the construction of airfields in the border districts should have been stopped - the great construction not only interfered with flight work, but also unmasked the airfields; in the 50-km border zone, the airfields could already be destroyed, since, given the prevailing balance of forces, their capture by the enemy was more than likely. However, the order of Marshal Timoshenko is about something completely different. In the statement, it is noted that

construction is proceeding unacceptably slowly. After that, the people's commissar orders: **"The military councils of the districts immediately begin the construction of airfields on a wide front, with the expectation that the construction of airfields will be completed no later than August 1, and the complete completion of airfields no later than October 1** (highlighted by me. - M.S. ) . **Submit the work schedule to me no later than June 25, 1941 ... "**

On June 18, another meeting with the military leadership was held in Stalin's office. Molotov, Malenkov, Timoshenko, Zhukov and deputy. People's Commissar of State Security Kobulov. We conferred for quite a long time (2 hours 45 minutes). Judging by the facts and documents now known, no fundamental changes took place in the course of carrying out "large-scale pre-mobilization measures" (that is, the covert strategic deployment of the Red Army). Requests from the command of the districts / fronts to speed up the advance (this is written in the memorandum of the PMC of the Western Front Fominykh mentioned above) were rejected. Such an overdue and overripe measure as the evacuation of the families of command personnel from the border (in fact, already near the front) strip was also directly prohibited. And this despite the fact that the procedure for such an evacuation, the timing, the vehicles involved, the places of loading and unloading were described in detail in the annexes to the plans for covering the districts. [138]

On June 19 at 10.45, Lieutenant General Konev, commander of the 19th Army, which is being formed on the basis of the administration and troops of the North Caucasian Military District, sends a telegram addressed to the People's Commissar of Defense: "I ask for permission to leave for **Rostov-on-Don for 3-5 days to decision of urgent questions on affairs of the district**". Since June 10, Konev's army has been concentrating in the area of the city of Cherkassy, constituting the strategic reserve of the Civil Code in the rear of the Southwestern Front. On June 20, at 19.57, a response cipher telegram leaves: **"I allow you to leave for Rostov-on-Don for 3-5 days. Timoshenko. [124]** At least until June 24, the army of the Reserve of the Civil Code remains without a commander - but the people's commissar of defense sees no reason to ban this trip. As for the "urgency of questions on the affairs of the district," this urgency evaporated on the night of June 22, and Konev flew by plane (!) Back to

Cherkassy, to the headquarters of the Army. On June 20, 1941, late in the evening, at 23.25, the Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General Sokolovsky, telegraphs to the commander of the Odessa Military District: **"According to intelligence data, the German aviation headquarters is intensely interested in the location of the headquarters of armored units in Chisinau. It is assumed that some kind of sabotage is being planned. The head of the Ge**

The possibility that the German air staff is making final adjustments to the list of targets for bombing is not expected.

June 21, 6:48 p.m. The Wehrmacht group deployed on the Eastern Front began "open execution of orders." Countless columns of troops moved to the border, company commanders (that is, tens of thousands of people!) Received the text of the order-address of the "Führer" to the soldiers, which they will read in their units late in the evening (as can be judged from the available documents - from 20 to 22 hours Berlin time). At this moment, General Sokolovsky sends two telegrams, to the ZapOVO and PribOVO: **Ponomarev, Kozamanov, Leontiev to check the construction of SD, without affecting the operational tactical side of the issue.** [38] No, who would argue, accounting and control is paramount, it's time to check that not a single bag of folk cement has gone "to the left."

Late evening June 21st. In Stalin's office, the text of the infamous Directive of the Main Military Council is being compiled. The very one that began with the words: **"During the 22-23.6.41, a surprise attack by the Germans is possible (!!!) ."** And even this, tragically absurd in a real situation, the word "possibly" was disavowed by the demand: **"The task of our troops is not to succumb to any provocative actions that could cause major complications."** This directive certainly existed. The corresponding

archival file was declassified in May 2002, and, having familiarized ourselves with the handwritten original (written by Zhukov on three pages), we can see and evaluate the corrections that were made to the text during the discussion. (Fig. 10.) In particular, the option "on the night of June 22, 1941" was eventually replaced by the less specific "during 22-23". From the phrase **"during the night of June 22, 1941, covertly occupy firing points of fortified areas and field installations on the state border"** the words **"and field installations"** were removed. The field structures (trenches, trenches, shelters, bunkers) of the forefields of the URs were located directly at the border line, and the compilers of the Directive, apparently, are still afraid of frightening the Germans ahead of time.

By the way, about time. Timoshenko and Zhukov left Stalin's office at 22.20, and the text of the directive was handed over to the encryption department of the General Staff only at 23.45. It cannot be said that the black Packard was rushing through the center of Moscow at night at breakneck speed... Nevertheless, there were still several hours left from the moment the Directive was handed over to the flurry of artillery fire at the border. Through the river Bug got over a defector - corporal of the Wehrmacht Alfred Liskov (in memoirs there are also references to

two defectors who crossed the border rivers on the night of June 21-22). Unknown heroes tried at the last minute to save the "homeland of the world proletariat." And what did they do in the People's Commissariat of Defense of the USSR? There

is a written description of Stalin's reaction to the news of the German invasion. It belongs to one of the main participants in the event - Marshal Zhukov. On May 19, 1956, he drafted and handed over to Khrushchev for approval a draft report at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU. That plenum never took place, but the text of Zhukov's unspoken speech has been preserved in the archive to this day: **"Stalin, breathing heavily into the telephone receiver, could not say anything for several minutes, and answered repeated questions: "This is a provocation of the German military. Do not open fire, so as not to unleash wider actions ... "Stalin again confirmed his idea of a provocation of the Germans when he arrived at the Central Committee. The message that German troops had already broken into our territory in a number of sectors did not convince him that the enemy had begun a real and pre-prepared war. [126]** It should be noted that Zhukov had to deliver his report at the Plenum in the presence of a living witness (in the spring of 1956 Molotov was still a member of the Central Committee), and therefore there are serious reasons to believe in the plausibility of this version.

РЕШЕНИЕ ПО  
АКТ № 622-23-05102г.  
Взрывом ввешан ЛВО, Прибово, Ковово, ОДВО.  
Комиссариат Народного комиссариата Военно-морского флота.  
Получено в ночь на 22.6.41. 23.6.41, в 10 ч.  
о ввешанное нагаждение немцев на <sup>фронте</sup> ~~ураг~~ ~~ка~~  
Прибово, Вайово, Ковово, ОДВО, ЛВО.  
Земле немцев может нагадываться с провока  
~~22.6.41 на рассвете рассредоточит~~

Rice. 10. "Directive number one", manuscript

June 21, 1941 head of the Executive Committee of the Comintern Comrade.

Dimitrov writes in his diary: **"I called Molotov in the morning. Asked to speak with**

***los. Vissarionovich on the situation and the necessary instructions for the Communist Parties. Molotov: "The situation is unclear. There is a big game going on. Not everything depends on us..." [139] "The Great Game".***

But, perhaps, the words "there is a big

struggle going on" would describe the situation more accurately? A great, terrible struggle was seething in the head of the most important person in the Land of the Soviets. He was not a fool and could not fail to understand what the stream of reports meant, which multiplied non-stop in the last hours before June 22. On the other hand, I really did not want to break away from my favorite business (preparation for delivering a crushing surprise blow to the back of my Berlin competitor), and experience, personal practical experience strengthened Stalin in the idea that none of the people could, would dare to oppose his will. Common sense and logic (which he was so proud of) suggested that comparing Hitler with such nonentities as Bukharin, Zinoviev or Yezhov was wrong and dangerous. Painfully inflated conceit made psychologically impossible even indirect, even tacit recognition of one's own mistakes, much less convulsive attempts to correct them. Overwhelmed by such torments, Comrade. Stalin unusually early, at 23.00 left his Kremlin office [46].

Tomorrow the war started. The Soviet people had to pay heavily for losing in Stalin's game.

## Part 2 Southwestern Front

## Chapter 2.1 Composition, deployment, plans of the parties

At dawn on June 22, 1941, the war began. The Red Army entered it without completing its strategic deployment, without even having time to start open mobilization. For any of the most significant European countries, the Second World War did not begin with such a "surprise". The Red Army did not have a plan of action adequate to the situation that arose, did not have time to build either the offensive grouping envisaged by the pre-war operational plans, or the impromptu defensive grouping. Such was the price of losing in the mysterious "big game" of Stalin, the meaning of which, perhaps, he did not understand

to the end and himself.

Under such initial conditions, the task that arose before the command of the Red Army did not have simple, ready-made and reliable solutions. Any variant of action was fraught with possible failure, any variant inevitably led to heavy losses of people and equipment. And yet, there were options for choosing "the best among the worst", and in different parts of the huge theater of operations they were significantly different. We will begin our consideration from the sector where the situation for the Red Army was most favorable, that is, from the Southwestern Front. It was there that the largest and best armed grouping of the Red Army was deployed, it was there that the enemy was inferior to it in all quantitative parameters.

### **The balance of**

**forces** The Southwestern Front, deployed on the basis of the troops of the Kiev OVO, had 32 rifle and 2 cavalry divisions. The enemy (the 6th and 17th armies of the Army Group South together with the GA reserves) had 24 infantry divisions (including four light infantry divisions, inferior to the "normal" in the number of people - two infantry regiments instead of three). Thus, the advancing side (the Wehrmacht) not only did not have a numerical superiority in infantry, but was also one-third inferior to the defenders. But that's not all - in the zone of the South-Western Front, two Armies of the Reserve GK were unloaded (16th in the Shepetovka, Zhitomir and 19th in the Cherkassy region), which were supposed to include 16 rifle divisions. The artillery of the South-Western Front (corps artillery

regiments and regiments of the RGK, not taking into account the artillery of "large and special power") consisted of 30 separate

artillery regiments (four in the 5th Army, five in the 6th Army, two in the 26th Army, four in the 12th Army, fifteen subordinate to the front command). The enemy in the South-Western Front had 7 cannon, 3 mixed and 7 howitzer battalions, a total of 17 separate artillery battalions. In other words, in this direction, the Red Army artillery regiments (three or four divisions each) had almost twice as many divisions as the enemy!

The grouping of heavy Soviet artillery was also very solid: five (4, 168, 324, 330, 526th) howitzer regiments of high power and four (34, 245, 315, 316th) separate "special power" artillery divisions. **[140]** Organizationally, they were all subordinate to the front command, which had a total of 192 203-mm howitzers and 35 super-heavy 280-mm howitzers. **[3]** The high concentration of heavy artillery in the zone of the South-Western Front, of course, was not an accident - this is the material preparation for the offensive on Krakow and Katowice, during which large-caliber artillery was supposed to destroy enemy fortifications. The enemy, on the other hand, in the 6th and 17th Armies (there was no high-powered artillery in the reserve of the GA "South" at all) had only 13 divisions. They were armed mainly with 210 mm howitzers, but there were also heavier systems: 305 mm mortars, 240 mm guns. With full staffing according to the maximum states, 117 high-power artillery systems could be recruited as part of 13 German divisions. Two times less than it was in service with the South-Western Front. In the number of armored troops, the advantage of the

"Eastern" was simply overwhelming. The SWF included eight mechanized corps, that is, 16 tank and 8 motorized divisions (recall that the Soviet motorized division basically corresponded in structure, and surpassed the German tank division in terms of the standard number of tanks). In addition, as part of the 16th Army, 3 more tank and 1 motorized divisions arrived and unloaded in the Berdichev and Proskurov area. A total of 28 armored formations are recruited.

The enemy in the 1st Panzer Group had only 5 tank divisions, as well as 3 motorized divisions and the SS motorized brigade "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler" [47]. All five tank divisions of the GA "South" included a tank regiment of a 2-battalion (i.e., minimum) composition, from 143 to 149 tanks in a division; total 728 tanks. If we subtract from this list the Pz-I machine-gun tankettes and the so-called "armed" with a cannon model. "commander tanks", then only 666 tanks remain (100 Pz-IV, 355 Pz-III, 211 Pz-II).



It is worth paying attention to the numbers of these divisions: 9, 11, 13, 14, 16th. The notorious "two-year experience of waging a modern war" in reality consisted in the fact that they did not participate in the Polish campaign (because they did not exist yet), and only one of the five (9th Panzer) took part in the campaign on the Western Front (May - June 1940), and even then on a secondary, Dutch site. Four others were formed in the second half of 1940, on the basis of infantry formations and, apart from a few days of the war in Yugoslavia, where the 11th TD and 14th TD managed to "check in", they had no combat experience at all.

To complete the picture, it is also worth considering three (191st, 197th, 243rd) divisions of "assault guns" (a short-barreled 75-mm gun in an armored cabin based on the chassis of a Pz-III medium tank), one (670th) division of self-propelled "fighters tanks" and one (102nd) battalion of flamethrower tanks, created on the basis of captured French B-1bis tanks. Taking into account these units, a total of about 770 units of armed armored vehicles are being recruited. If all 28 tank and motorized divisions located in the zone of the South-

Western Front were manned at full strength and brought into battle, then the Germans would be opposed by an armored horde of 9.5 thousand tanks (here, by the way, the question arises - where could one find bridges and roads along which a tank avalanche of such a size could move in space?) However, as it was quite rightly noted in the works of two generations of Soviet historians, the real staffing was very far from the regular one. History gave Stalin little time, and the command of the Southwestern Front - few tanks. This "little" was measured by the number of 4.7 thousand tanks [48], thus the quantitative superiority over the enemy was "only" sixfold. Let's not forget about 800 BA-10 armored vehicles armed with a 45-mm cannon in a rotating "tank" turret.

You can count even harder. Tanks do not fight in large crowds, they are in service with the corresponding military formations; guided by this logic, it is necessary to exclude from the general list tanks scattered in small quantities among the new divisions that are being formed. With this method of counting, the armored forces of the SWF are reduced to 14 divisions, each of which had about the same number of tanks as in the enemy tank divisions (or much more).

So, only in the composition of large combat-ready formations was about 3.7 thousand serviceable (!) Tanks and 0.4 thousand BA-10 armored vehicles.

The overwhelming quantitative superiority of the Soviet side was complemented by an equally significant superiority in the performance characteristics of armored vehicles. On

five tank divisions of the GA "South" were armed with only 355 medium tanks (Pz-IV and Pz-III of the latest modifications with a 50-mm cannon and a "blotch" on the frontal armor of the hull). Everything else is light tanks (100 Pz-IIIs of the first modifications with a 37-mm cannon and 211 Pz-IIs). On the other side of the front, there were as many new tanks (KV and T-34) [49] as the Germans had of all kinds, including light tanks and self-propelled guns.

|                | KB  | T-34 | T-28 | БТ, Т-26 | БА-10  |
|----------------|-----|------|------|----------|--------|
| 19 тд (22 МК)  | —   | —    | —    | 148      | 58     |
| 41 тд (22 МК)  | 31  | —    | —    | 345      | ?      |
| 215 мд (22 МК) | —   | —    | —    | 129      | ?      |
| 10 тд (15 МК)  | 63  | 38   | 45   | 193      | 56     |
| 37 тд (15 МК)  | 1   | 34   | —    | 277      | 14     |
| 8 тд (4 МК)    | 50  | 140  | 60   | 62       | 57     |
| 32 тд (4 МК)   | 49  | 173  | —    | 128      | 28     |
| 81 мд (4 МК)   | —   | —    | —    | 238      | 18     |
| 12 тд (8 МК)   | 58  | 98   | —    | 179      | 54     |
| 34 тд (8 МК)   | 8   | —    | 48   | 267      | 10     |
| 15 тд (16 МК)  | 4   | —    | 69   | 156      | 54     |
| 39 тд (16 МК)  | —   | —    | —    | 203      | 16     |
| 43 тд (19 МК)  | 5   | 9    | —    | 232      | ?      |
| 109 мд (5 МК)  | —   | —    | —    | 154      | ?      |
| ИТОГО:         | 269 | 492  | 222  | 2711     | 6. 378 |

**Table 8**

**Note:** - T-27,

T-37, T-38, T-40 machine-gun tankettes are not taken into account;

- only serviceable tanks are taken into account (with the exception of data on 215

TD, 34 TD, 39 TD, 109

MD); - in 34 TD there were T-35 tanks, not T-28.

Bearing in mind the half-century "brainstorm" on the topic that "two-thirds of Soviet tanks were out of order", we will immediately give the real numbers for the armored forces of the Kiev OVO on June 1, 1941: 1029 tanks of the "1st category" (new, serviceable) and 3217 tanks of the "2nd category" ("in **operation, fully operational and fit for use for their intended purpose**" ) [50]. Source: "Statement of the availability and technical condition of combat vehicles", signed on July 11, 1941 by the head of the 2nd department. 1st branch of the GABTU comrade. Sedukov. [141] It is not surprising that for the latest T-34s and KVs, the percentage of serviceable ones exceeds 99%. But even for the "hopelessly outdated" T-26s, serviceable ones account for 89% of the total, for BT-5/7 tanks, the percentage of serviceable ones is 90; even among the long-discontinued triple-turret T-28s, 79.5% are working properly.

Some idea (a serious study of the issue is still waiting for its researchers) about the possibilities of repairing and maintaining tanks of the South-Western Front is given by an incomplete list of district and central subordination of warehouses for armored vehicles on the territory of the Kiev Regional Military District: No. 376 in Tarnopol for 95 wagons, No. 965 in Lvov for 143 wagons, No. 130 in Kharkov for 550 wagons, No. 304 in Kiev for 674 wagons. [142] Of course, the warehouses of the ABTU of the district were filled not only with spare parts for tanks, but all the same - the figure of

one and a half thousand wagons is impressive. In particular, if you read after it this excerpt from the report of the head of the logistics service of the 1st Tank Group of the Wehrmacht dated August 4, 1941: ***"The supply of spare parts continues to be unsatisfactory. Of the 25 tons that were delivered to the divisions, only 25% were fit. So, for tanks, very minor spare parts are often missing, the absence of which prevents a quick repair."*** [143] Or the letter that on July 3 the chief of staff of the 1st TGr sent to the inspector general of the "mobile" (armored) troops: ***"I must ask you for help. We request spare parts, but nothing comes. It looks like the application is going too far. The workshops are full, we cannot work because there are no spare parts. There is a particular shortage of tank engines (failing due to dust), Variorex gearboxes, old-style track rollers for the Pz III..."*** [ 144] The flooding "lament of Yaroslavna" rolls over the

waves of the Internet and through the pages of paper books. "Stop counting tanks! Tanks without cars cannot fight! What could the mechanized corps do, in which neither ammunition nor fuel could be carried (at this point the clickers pause and, having crumpled the phrase, continue) there was nothing. In place of the pause, the words should have sounded: "behind the tanks rapidly advancing hundreds of kilometers deep into enemy territory." With such a clarification, "crying" would acquire at least some meaning. In a real situation, when not a single tank division of the South-Western Front (with the exception of the 34th TD) went on the offensive more than 30–40 km and did not fight for more than 1–2 days, talking about "delivery of fuel and ammunition" becomes somewhat strange ...

Nevertheless, one should estimate the real volumes of material resources that would be needed for tanks rapidly advancing hundreds of kilometers deep into enemy territory. Fortunately, we have at our disposal a most valuable document: the service report mentioned above

rear (quartermaster) of the 1st Tank Group of the Wehrmacht dated August 4, 1941 [143] By that time, the divisions of the 1st TGr fought near Kiev and Uman (i.e., passed at least 500 km from the border), and from their enemy - mechanized corps of the South-Western Front - only numbers remained. This result was achieved at the cost of spending [51] per day on average: -

- 1000 cubic meters. fuel;
- 500 tons of ammunition; -
- 400 tons of food. The compilers

of the German report believed that they had 10 divisions on allowance. As part of the mechanized corps of the South-Western Front - not counting the emerging 24 MK, in which there were neither cars nor tanks in quantities worth mentioning - there were twice as many divisions. Accordingly, for the supply, allowing you to fight the way the German motorized units fought, it took about 4 thousand tons per day. With a margin, taking into account the amazing properties of shrinkage and shrinkage of gasoline in the USSR, let's take a round number: **5 thousand tons** of fuel, ammunition and food per day.

What problems with the transportation of such a volume of cargo could the mechanized corps of the South-Western Front have? What was missing? There were huge problems - but in the minds, and not at all in the "absent" cars. We start counting: 2.3 thousand trucks in 4 MK, 2.5 thousand trucks in 8 MK, 1.5 thousand in 15 MK, the same 1.5 thousand in 16 MK, 1 thousand in 22 MK, 0.9 thousand in 9 MK and 0.7 thousand in 19 MK. In total, this gives 10.4 thousand cars. Without taking into account the mobilization of machines from the national economy. We divide the figure in half (some of the cars were busy transporting special cargo and equipment, the bosses took something to evacuate their pianos and ficuses, etc.). There are 5,000 trucks left. At least a third of this number are three-ton ZISs, the rest are "one and a half". What is the problem? 10 thousand tons of cargo (twice more than one daily requirement) could be transported on one flight ...

Separate anti-tank units of the GA "South" in the zone of the South-Western Front consisted of as many as three anti-tank units: two (525th and 652nd) battalions of conventional towed guns, 36 "mallets" of 37 mm caliber each and one (670th ) a battalion of anti-tank self-propelled 47-mm guns (the combat value of this "device" was mentioned above). In total (and assuming that all these units were completed to the last button) 99 barrels are recruited. The figure, in comparison with the number of tank formations of the Southwestern Front and their weapons, is simply not serious.

Five (1, 2, 3, 4, 5th) anti-tank artillery brigades were deployed as part of the SWF, which in total gives 600 barrels of 76-, 85- and 107-mm guns. It is rather strange to spend shells of this caliber on the tanks that the Germans had, but in war (as, indeed, in any other business), "the pocket does not pull the stock." Above, we have already quoted the "Temporary instructions for the combat use of the PTABR" drawn up at the headquarters of the Kiev Regional Military District, according to which one brigade could (should) stop the advance of 400-500 enemy tanks, and each gun "is capable of firing at least 3-4 aimed shots **at minute, of which 1 shot disables the tank**. For five PTABRs, there were simply no such number of enemy tanks in the SWF zone, so they could not show all their capabilities; nevertheless, it would be quite realistic to assume that the available PTABRs would be enough to finish off the badly battered enemy tank units that broke through the defenses of rifle divisions and the fire of anti-tank guns of the Molotov line bunkers.

A characteristic feature of the hostilities in the summer of 1941 was the use of heavy anti-aircraft guns as an impromptu means of fighting tanks (this topic has occupied the pages of military history to an even greater extent in recent years). And although a large-caliber (85- or 88-mm) anti-aircraft gun, weighing 4-5 tons, with dimensions taller than a person, was, to put it mildly, not the most suitable weapon for a duel with a tank, the need (lack of anti-tank weapons adequate for the task) forced the Germans use them too.

In the offensive zone of the 1st Tank Group, 6th and 17th Armies, 14 heavy and so-called. "mixed" air defense divisions, armed with 88-mm anti-aircraft guns. Strictly speaking, all of them were intended to solve their direct tasks - the fight against enemy aircraft (and taking into account the balance of forces in the air that developed in the sky over Western Ukraine, such a composition of air defense forces was not at all redundant); in addition, it should be noted that 10 out of 14 divisions were organizationally part of the Luftwaffe and were not subordinate to the command of the ground forces. Nevertheless, in the zone of the South-Western Front, the enemy had (more correctly, he could have, provided that he was fully equipped) 160 heavy anti-aircraft guns [52]. The Red Army lived in a different

numerical dimension: by June 22, 1941, the troops of the South-Western Front were armed with 1140 anti-aircraft guns of 76 mm and 85 mm caliber.

The reader has probably already noticed that in this book war in the air is completely taken out of the scope of consideration; I can refer those who are interested to the two-volume "New Chronology of the Catastrophe", where the events of the first days are considered literally by the hour, for each airfield and air regiment. **[145]** Here we confine

ourselves to a brief reference. With the toughest approach - excluding reconnaissance air regiments, attack air regiments from the general list (at the beginning of the war they were armed with obsolete I-15bis biplanes), excluding the so-called. "forming regiments", excluding heavy bomber regiments, equipped with obsolete four-engine giants TB-3 - by the time the war began, the Kiev OVO Air Force had 1,174 fighter aircraft (including 222 MiG-3 and Yak-1) and 586 bombers. A total of 1760 aircraft and more than 1.6 thousand crews. In addition, the 4th air corps of the DBA (Zaporozhye, Melitopol), consisting of 6 regiments, which were armed with 345 bombers, and the 2nd air corps of the DBA (Kursk), consisting of 6 air regiments, could be involved in combat operations in the sky of Ukraine, 252 bombers.

The enemy, as part of the 5th Aviation Corps, operating jointly with the Army Group "South" over Ukraine, had 3 fighter and 8 bomber groups (air regiments). In total (including temporarily out of service aircraft), the 5th Air Corps was armed with 247 bombers (163 Ju-88 and 84 He-111) and 109 Bf-109 fighters. There was not a single Ju-87 dive bomber in the sky over the Southwestern Front at all. A day after the start of hostilities (June 23), an order was received to relocate another fighter group from Romania to the airfields of southern Poland, which was armed with 20 serviceable Messers. Thus, in terms of the total number of aircraft and crews, the Soviet Air Force had an almost fivefold numerical superiority in this theater of operations. Taking into account DBA bombers, it becomes six times. In terms of fighters, the superiority was ninefold. We note right away that for the entire long day of June 22, the SWF Air Force irretrievably lost 135 aircraft on the ground (126 fighters and 9 bombers) and about 25-34 more fighters were irretrievably lost in air battles. The enemy irretrievably lost 33 aircraft that day (28 bombers and 5 fighters). The calculator suggests that the ratio of the number of aircraft of the parties on the first day of the war practically did not change.

To complete the picture, we should also mention the presence of a "third party" - an armed anti-Soviet underground. For the troops of the Southwestern Front, the war began on, in the language of the Pravda newspaper,

liberated from the oppression of the lords of the land of Western Ukraine. The orders that the "liberators" from the NKVD introduced there caused the local population, first, extreme amazement, then mortal horror, and then a desire for revenge. The mass executions of prisoners carried out in the prisons of Western Ukraine in the first days of the war "added fuel to the fire" of the bloody turmoil that flared up even more. Especially strongly "flared" in Galicia, which for the previous century and a half was part of the Habsburg Empire (and before that - in the Commonwealth) and where Russia was previously treated without much sympathy.

A detailed discussion of this topic will take us far beyond the scope of this study. Briefly, it can and should be noted only that the scale of influence of the "third party" on the course and outcome of hostilities should not be underestimated (as was customary in Soviet historiography) or exaggerated (which, alas, has become fashionable in recent times).

Of course, the small, poorly armed, combat groups of Ukrainian and Polish nationalists who did not have a unified command could not engage in open battle with the regular army and inflict serious losses on it. On the other hand, the presence of the anti-Soviet underground provided German intelligence with the necessary (if not excessive) number of agents, and led to a widespread disruption in the mobilization of people and transport to the Red Army. Perhaps the most significant "contribution" of the nationalists to the success of the Wehrmacht was the creation of such a situation around the families of the command staff of the Red Occupation Army, in which, from the very first hours of the war, many commanders abandoned their subordinates and rushed to save their wives and children from the inevitable cruel reprisal.

Last (but by no means least important) we will consider such a component of the balance of forces of the parties as the qualifications of their commanders. Army Group South was commanded by Field Marshal Rundstedt. It is difficult to find at least something unusual in his biography - everything is quite "ordinary". A hereditary military man (his father rose to the rank of major general of the Prussian army), at the age of 12 he entered a cadet school, promoted to lieutenant in 1893, and graduated from the Military Academy in 1907.

His future opponent, the commander of the South-Western Front, Colonel-General Kirponos, two years later, in 1909, would enter the service of the Korovyakovskoye forestry as a forest guard. During World War I, Major Rundstedt served as chief of staff of an infantry corps and was awarded two Iron Crosses. The forester Kirponos was drafted into the army in

September 1915, but was in no hurry to fight - only in August 1917 he ended up on the Romanian front as a company paramedic.

After the defeat of Germany, Rundstedt remained to serve in the Reichswehr, in 1927 he was already a major general, at the time Hitler came to power with the rank of lieutenant general, he commanded the 1st Army Group in Berlin. Rundstedt met World War II with the rank of colonel general and as commander of the Army Group South, which occupied Warsaw in September 1939. Then - the French campaign, during which Rundstedt commanded Army Group A, which broke through the front at Sedan and surrounded the main Allied forces at Dunkirk. After the victory in France, he receives the highest military rank of Field Marshal.

After the defeat of Russia in the war, the paramedic Kirponos went into the revolution and, as he writes in his autobiography, ***“was the initiator of the organization of red partisan detachments ... On July 1, 1919, he was appointed assistant head of the school of Red commanders in the city of Zhytomyr ... In May 1920, he was appointed to the 2nd Kiev school of red foremen, where he worked in positions from the commander of the economic team to the commissar of the school ... ”*** [146] The peak of Kirponos's military career was three years (from 1931 to 1934) as chief of staff of the 51st rifle division in Odessa , after which he was sent to a provincial outback to the post of head of the Kazan

Infantry School. A dizzying rise began after the Finnish war. The head of the infantry school was drafted into the army and became the commander of the 70th rifle division. In the last days of the war, the Kirponos division accomplished a feat - terrible, bloody, absolutely meaningless. Under the terms of the peace treaty, the city of Vyborg (Viipuri) was to go to the USSR. Nevertheless, Stalin and Timoshenko ordered, without waiting for the day and hour of the ceasefire, to take the city by storm. The 70th Rifle Division was ordered to bypass the city on the ice of the Gulf of Finland, and the division commander walked ahead of the attacking chains. The personal courage shown by Kirponos was noticed - he received the gold star of the Hero of the Soviet Union and was appointed commander of the 49th Rifle Corps.

This is where Comrade Stalin would have stopped - but no, he really liked the modest and courageous newly minted Major General Kirponos. In June 1940, having jumped several rungs of the career ladder at once, the former division commander was appointed to the post of ... commander of the Leningrad Military District! But even this was not enough. In February 1941, Stalin appointed Mr. K. Zhukov to the post of chief of the General Staff, and the vacated office of the commander



Kirponos was occupied by the troops of the Kyiv OVO - the most powerful military district of the Soviet Union, who at the same time received the third promotion in military rank in 9 months (!!!) (now he is already a colonel general). "A

**rare example in the history of wars ..."**

Despite the arithmetic of the balance of power, which hardly left the Germans a theoretical chance for a successful defense, the Wehrmacht command planned an offensive operation with decisive goals and to great depths. To some extent, the task of the German generals was "facilitated" by the fact that they had a very vague - and generally underestimated - idea of the size of the enemy. So, in the documents of the 6th Army in early June 1941, the tank forces in the Kiev OVO zone were estimated at 1900 units, of which 1000 were in "motorized strike groups" (? Perhaps that was how the mechanized corps were called); **"enemy air forces in Galicia, Volyn and northern Ukraine to the Dnieper"** were estimated at 700 fighters and 325 bombers. [147] Approved on May 2, 1941, "Instructions for the advance

**(Aufmarscheinweisung)** "Barbarossa" formulated the task of the Wehrmacht in the GA "South" zone as follows: **"The task of the operation is mainly to destroy the Russian army in the western regions of Russia. To do this, it is necessary to break through the Russian front in several places with superior forces, with a quick and deep blow to the east, to prevent the withdrawal of Russian forces beyond the Dnieper and deprive the Russian command of the conditions for interconnected counter-operations ... It should be a matter of honor for every commander to strive to prevent the retreat of a combat-ready enemy to the east.** [148] Since, as part of the general distribution of forces and means of the Wehrmacht, a

relatively small tank grouping was included in the Army Group South, the German command abandoned its intention to deliver two strikes (under the northern and southern bases of the Lvov ledge) after some hesitation. . All five tank divisions were brought together as part of one 1st Tank Group, which was to carry out such a complex operation as a breakthrough to a depth of 350–400 km and one-sided coverage of a large enemy grouping.

The natural and geographical conditions of the area did not leave much freedom in choosing the direction of the main attack. (Fig. 11.) The southern bypass of the "Lvov ledge" runs along the ridge of the Carpathian mountains, a sabotage group could pass there, but not a mechanized army of the middle of the 20th century. The area south of the Carpathians (Bessarabia and the steppes of southern Ukraine), it would seem, was optimal for the use of large armored units, but on the way of the advancing there was a "palisade" from the rivers Prut, Dniester, Yuzhny

Bug, and in their lower, i.e., the most full-flowing course. The region north of the line Kovel, Rivne, Novograd-Volynsky (Ukrainian Polissya) is a vast array of forests and swamps; The German army did not know how to fight in such places. Former Wehrmacht General Filippi, in his famous post-war study, describes them this way: ***“Even at the beginning of July, traces of the spring thaw were still visible. The unregulated waters of the swamps often still flooded the banks; significant areas of the area did not dry out. There were very few roads suitable for use, and at the same time, any progress outside the roads was almost excluded. [149]***

Thus, the “method of exclusion” remained one acceptable option - the main attack of mechanized formations at the northern base of the “Lvov ledge”. It is worth noting that this decision potentially had two sub-options: an offensive strictly to the east, along the axis of Lutsk, Rivne, Zhytomyr, or a breakthrough of border fortifications on the northern bypass of the “Lvov ledge” with a further offensive to the southeast, along the axis of Lvov, Tarnopol, Proskurov. In the latter case, the Germans had to move along the so-called. “Galician ridge”, a hill on the watershed between the tributaries of the Pripyat and the tributaries of the Dniester; this made it possible to pass on solid dirt roads and avoid the need to force numerous water barriers.



Rice. 11. Kyiv Special Military District

Such a possibility was mentioned in the above-cited "Advancement Instructions", but in fact the Wehrmacht command chose the first "sub-option", which meant moving through fairly swampy terrain and successively forcing three rivers: Styr, Goryn and Sluch. It can be assumed that the decision to advance along the southern edge of the Polissya swamps was due to the desire to "rake" as large a grouping of Soviet troops as possible during the planned unilateral envelopment; in the event of an attack on Tarnopol, Proskurov, significant forces of the Red Army could remain outside the encirclement cauldron that was being created. Ultimately, the 1st Tank Group was given such

tasks:

***"After breaking through the border fortifications, it moves its motorized formations and individual units attached to it as quickly as possible to the east as follows: the 48th tank corps through Sokal, Radzekhov, Shurovitsa (near Styr) to Dubno, the 3rd tank corps through Vladimir-Volynsky, Lutsk on Rovno ... The first task for the Tank Group is to take the crossings across the river as quickly as possible. Stay at Shurovitsa, Berestechko and Lutsk, so that from this line through Berdichev and Zhitomir go to Kyiv. Move the center of efforts to where the initial successes will be better ... In the further course of the operation, the 1st TGr must create bridgeheads near***

***Kiev and below it in time, while the bulk of its troops, wasting no time, continues the offensive west of the Dnieper to the southeast in order to cut off the enemy's withdrawal across the Dnieper and thereby lay the foundation for his destruction.***

**[150]** Each of the tank corps mentioned above included three divisions. Not without some confusion, which dragged on until the very day the

invasion began, their composition was determined as follows: 13th and 14th tank, 25th motorized as part of the "northern" 3 TK, 11th and 16 I am motorized as part of the "southern" 48 shopping mall. In the second echelon of the Panzer Group, the 14th TK (the 9th Panzer Division, the SS motorized division "Viking" and the SS motorized brigade "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler") was waiting for the command to cross the border. While the Soviet command (judging by pre-war plans) considered it possible to deploy and move from 30 to 42 tank and motorized divisions in the Western Ukrainian theater of operations, the Wehrmacht generals did not see enough roads even for five tank and three motorized divisions; they considered it possible to bring 14 TK into battle only after the infantry formations of the 17th Army broke through Rava-Russian

fortified area and opened the direction of Zholkev, Busk, Brody for the movement of tanks (see Fig. 2).

Tank corps are the "tip of the spear", an important detail, but far from the only one, and certainly not the largest. As in all other sectors of the Eastern Front, in the GA "South" strip, the bulk of the German troops were infantry divisions. The difference from the decisions taken by the command of the GA "North" and "Center" was that the command of the GA "South" did not risk its small tank divisions, and the task of breaking through the line of border fortifications was entrusted exclusively to the infantry units; tank divisions were to enter the "gap" created for them by the infantry, and the motorized divisions were to move in the second echelon behind

for tanks.

The total length of the border (from Vlodava in the north to Lipkana in the south) in the strip of the Kyiv OVO, taking into account all the meanders of the border rivers Bug and San, exceeded 900 km. If the Germans had stretched the 24 infantry divisions they had along the entire border, then a "thread" would have turned out that was not even capable of defense, much less a "quick and deep strike to the east." Of course, the command of the GA "South" did not make such a mistake and strictly observed the First Rule of operational art (concentration of forces in the chosen direction). 18 infantry divisions of the first echelon of the 6th and 17th Armies were deployed in the area from Lyuboml to Przemyśl (see Fig. 2), which arithmetically accounted for only one third of the total length of the border in the Kiev OVO zone. South of Przemyśl, a weak fettering group was operating, consisting of two so-called. "security divisions" [53]. South of the city of Sanok, i.e., along the entire length of the southern bypass of the Lvov ledge to the Prut River, there were no German troops at all. Forces were massed just as decisively at the tactical level. The

existing 18 divisions were not stretched out in a uniform chain. In the zone of the upcoming main attack of the tank corps, from Vladimir Volynsky to Krystynopol, seven (and taking into account the 9th infantry division, which had the task of advancing south, cutting off Soviet troops from crossings over the Bug River near Krystynopol, then all eight) infantry divisions. Another "bunch of forces" is observed in the Rava-Russkaya area, where three Wehrmacht infantry divisions prepared to advance along the Zamostye-Zholkiew highway. In other areas, the German infantry advanced in a very "discharged" formation - an average of 20-25 km of front per division, which was several times higher than the statutory norms adopted in the Red Army.

Having concentrated most of the forces in the first echelon, the command of the GA "South" was left with very weak reserves: 6 divisions, including one (4-

i) incomplete mountain infantry and three (97th, 99th, 100th) light infantry. But perhaps the most striking manifestation of "courage on the verge of recklessness" was the location of the headquarters. The most important headquarters (the command of the Army Group) was located near the city of Rzeszow, 60 km along the highway from the border, at a distance from their troops, cut off from them by the San River. Not much safer was the location of the headquarters of the 17th Army. It is hard not to recall here the story of the death of Vasily Ivanovich Chapaev, whose division headquarters broke away dozens of miles from its units and was completely destroyed as a result of a daring raid by the Cossack cavalry ...

The most important (if not to say harsher - the only) condition that made it possible to successfully implement the operational plan of the command of the GA "South" was to be the passivity of the command of the South-Western Front. In the book mentioned above, General Filippi writes: ***"The grouping of***

***Russian forces gave the command of the Red Army significant chances for a successful defense. It could effectively use this grouping to strike at the interventionists, for example, by concentrating mechanized formations successfully located in the depths and large forces remaining unbound on the Hungarian border into a fist, as well as by transferring a certain number of units from the Bessarabian border to this group, where there are no active hostilities. was conducted. The blow of such a powerful fist could be directed along the southern flank of the German breakthrough wedge. The German plan, worked out with such confidence, would then be in jeopardy. Only by correctly assessing the ability of the Reds to command and control troops (highlighted by me. - M.S. ), the commander of the Army Group could take the risk associated with the outlined plan ... In general, the plan under discussion and its successful implementation are a rare example in the history of***

***wars of the effectiveness of unilateral coverage - all the more remarkable because the impact of the factor of surprise could hardly go beyond the scope of the first battles here. And although the enemy had to understand in time what danger threatens him, he nevertheless rendered the German command the "kind service" necessary for the implementation of the described plan. [149]*** The deployment and condition of the troops of the front Directly at the border, in the zone of the upcoming offensive of the 6th and 17th

Wehrmacht Armies, there were ten Soviet

divisions: from Lyuboml to Krystynopol four (45, 62, 87, 124th) rifle divisions 5 -th Army, then the 3rd cavalry and three (41, 159, 97th) rifle divisions of the 6th Army, near Przemysl and to the south were two (99th rifle and 72nd

mountain rifle) division of the 26th Army. The 135th Rifle Division, which was part of the 5th Army, was located north of Lutsk, 80 km from the border.

In the Carpathians, along the southern contour of the Lvov ledge, the left-flank (173rd rifle) division of the 26th Army and six rifle (mountain) divisions of the 12th Army were deployed. Five (31st, 36th, 37th, 49th and 55th) rifle corps of the second echelon of the front, three rifle divisions each, were on the march and by the morning of June 22 they reached the "old border" or somewhat west of it (on the Sarna line, Tarnopol), that is, they were 150–200 km from the front line.

The three most powerful mechanized corps (not only in the South-Western Front, but throughout the Red Army), the 8th, 4th and 15th concentrated along the "arc" Sambir, Lvov, Brody, Kremenets, at a distance of 50-100 km from the border. The 22nd mechanized corps was divided into two parts: the 41st tank division (the largest in the entire Red Army in terms of the number of tanks) was located near the border, near the city of Vladimir-Volynsky, two other divisions of the corps (19th tank and 215th I motorized) were stationed between Lutsk and Rivne. These armored formations could advance to the front within 1-2 days. At the southern base of the Lvov ledge, in the Stanislav (now Ivano-Frankivsk) zone, Chernivtsi, the

16th mechanized corps was deployed. Three emerging, relatively weak mechanized corps (9th, 19th and 24th) were located in the depths, respectively, at Novograd-Volynsky, Berdichev and Proskurov, 200–250 km separated them from the front line. Finally, in the Berdichev, Shepetovka, Proskurov zone, formations of the 16th Army of the Reserve of the Civil Code, including the 109th motorized division, were unloaded.

Directly subordinated anti-tank artillery command front brigades were in the area of Novograd-Volynsky (5th), Lutsk (1st), Tarnopol (2nd), Stanislav (3rd), Kamenetz-Podolsk (4th); with the exception of the 1st PTABR, all of them were at a distance of more than 100-150 km from the border. Thus, the following paradoxical situation developed: despite

the general quantitative superiority of the South-Western Front troops over the enemy, the Germans had a two-fold numerical advantage in infantry directly in the zone of the first contact of the parties, and three times in the directions of the main attack (Sokal, Krystynopol, Rava-Russkaya) and even quadruple.

Not only did the rifle divisions of the Southwestern Front not find themselves in the right place at the right time, but by the time the war actually began, they were not equipped according to the wartime staff. In peacetime, they were kept according to the so-called. "10 thousandth state", but in fact in

divisions were 9–9.5 thousand people each. In the course of covert mobilization, under the pretext of "training camps", more than 60 thousand people were called up to the rifle divisions of the Kyiv Regional Military District, which made it possible to increase the number of personnel by 1-2-3 thousand [54].

Specific figures and terms of complete mobilization are given in his textbook monograph by General Vladimírsky (at the time of the start of the war - deputy chief of the Operations Department of the headquarters of the 5th Army of the South-Western Front): "Since

May 20, 1941, in order to ***retrain in the western regions of Ukraine, was involved in 45-day training camps with rifle divisions. In this regard, about 2,500 privates and 150-200 non-commissioned officers were added to each rifle division (except the 135th). This made it possible to increase the number of personnel of each rifle division to 12-12.5 thousand people, or up to 85-90% of the wartime staff ... The order of mobilization provided for by the mobilization plans of the units basically boiled down to the following. Each part was divided into two mobilization echelons.***

***The first mobilization***

***echelon included 80-85% of the personnel of the unit ... The deadline for the readiness of the first echelon to set out on a campaign to complete a combat mission was set at 6 hours. The second mobilization echelon of the unit included 15–20% of the personnel, as well as the entire reserve staff that arrived on mobilization. The deadline for readiness for the second echelon of units, and consequently for the entire formation, was set: for the formations stationed in the border zone, as well as for the air defense and air force forces, no later than the established day of mobilization, and for all other formations - in a day (highlighted by me. - M.S. ) . By the end of these terms, all personnel who arrived on mobilization had to, having undergone sanitization, received weapons, uniforms, equipment and ammunition, join the units to which they were assigned. [43]***

So, for the full mobilization of the rifle divisions of the first echelon of the South-Western Front, it took only 1-2 days - at least in this sense, Stalin's "big game" benefited the Red Army, and during the "large-scale pre-mobilization measures" a lot was done before the morning of June 22. And now let's look at the timing of the situation on the other side of the border river. In the

defense zone of the 5th Army, the Germans had 9 infantry divisions in the first echelon, which gave them a twofold numerical superiority. But

this numerical superiority must also be transferred to the eastern bank of the Bug, for which it is necessary to build pontoon bridges, transport 16 thousand people and 5 thousand horses in each division over them, and then deploy the division from the march column into battle formation for the offensive - all this is completely not easy and not fast. Even in exercises, without any resistance from the enemy, such a maneuver will take at least half a day. What if the enemy resists? If it demolishes crossings with artillery fire (there were only four individual artillery regiments in the 5th Army, and this is at least 12 divisions of heavy artillery), bombs from the air, if it encounters inevitably small forward detachments with hurricane fire of machine guns and mortars? How long will it take in such a situation to move the abstract "numerical superiority" and what will be left of this superiority? **Options**

Summing up everything

stated in

this chapter, it is possible to outline three fundamentally different options for actions that could be resorted to by the command of the Southwestern Front.

First. Stubborn defense in the zone of border fortified areas and the most forced advancement of rifle corps of the second echelon of the South-Western Front to the border. In this case, the ability of the troops of the 5th and 6th Armies to resist for some, quite specific (and by no means infinite) time became the condition for the success of the defensive operation.

Rifle corps of the second echelon (15 divisions) were located about 200 km from the border. If we continue the same march on foot, with the convoy and training targets, then they would have to trudge to the border for another 7-10 days. However, if there is a desire and competent command, they fight in a completely different way. Here we can recall how the British evacuated their troops (300 thousand people) from Dunkirk across the English Channel: everything was involved, any vessel capable of staying on the water, from pleasure boats to port tugs and fishing schooners. On solid ground, everything becomes even faster

and easier. First of all, it was necessary to reduce the mass of troops transported - in order to ensure successful defense on the border, it was not at all necessary to transfer all 15 rifle divisions at once, with all their services and rear units; it was necessary and sufficient in the shortest possible time to put forward a "combat core" (machine-gun, mortar, anti-aircraft, anti-tank units) of 5-7 divisions to the line of the border fortified areas. And this, by the way, is not a belated fantasies of an amateur, but a solution worked out in February 1941 during a military game in the Baltic OVO (then from 6 rifle divisions of the second echelon



withdrew anti-tank divisions and hastily transferred them to a conditional "front"; by a strange irony of history, this happened "June 25-30 in the game").

**[151]** Five

thousand trucks could transport this "combat core" in one flight, maximum two. There were trucks: as of June 22, 1941, the SWF included 19,351 "one and a half" and 12,316 three-ton ZIS-5 [55]. Since the announcement of the open mobilization of vehicles in the army, there should have been much more. There were 6865 tractors for transporting artillery, including 1142 Komsomolets, which was 268 units more than the estimated regular requirement (and this is not to mention the fact that any vehicle could tow a 45-mm anti-tank gun). **[152]** Finally, no one canceled the most productive type of land transport, i.e. the railway -

since Kovel and Lvov were the largest railway junctions, where tracks from all over Western Ukraine converge. There was no need to carry the heaviest and most bulky cargo - ammunition - there was no need to carry them, they were already prepared in the border strip in huge quantities. In general, if there was a command that had the will and the ability to take the initiative, it was possible to transfer the second echelon of front infantry to the border in 2-3 days. Could the divisions of the first echelon of the front hold out for 2-3 days? There is no

single answer to such a question. And no modern supercomputer with a program for simulating combat actions will give an answer, because a certain very controversial parameter must be introduced into the miracle machine: "moral stability of the troops." The Finns on the Mannerheim Line, with a much worse (for them) balance of power, held out for three months. The 41st Rifle Division held Rava Russkaya until 15:00 on 27 June. The garrisons of individual bunkers resisted until the end of June. The 13th outpost of the 90th border detachment fought for eleven days ... Turning to the combat Charter of the PU-39, we see that the defense against a numerically superior enemy was considered the norm, and not at all "force majeure", and in the presence of hundreds of reinforced concrete pillboxes, Vladimir Volynsky, Strumilovsky and Rava-Russian fortified areas such defense could be stable. At least - within the specified 2-3-day period. I would like to remind the reader, outraged by the cynicism of the author, who "argues in an easy chair in front of the monitor,

who should have fought and how," I want to remind you that war is a bad and cruel thing, sentiments are superfluous there. In the current situation, the soldiers of the border divisions had little choice: either an honest death in battle, or death in a German camp for

prisoners of war. The statistics are well known today: two-thirds of the prisoners of the summer of 1941 did not live until the spring of next year; combat irretrievable losses in 2-3-4 days of stubborn defense could be much less.

Second option. After the very first shots, begin withdrawing troops from the "Lvov ledge" to the east, to the line of the Styr, Ikva, Seret rivers, or even further - across the Sluch River, to the fortified areas on the "old border". This would make it possible to significantly reduce the length of the line of defense, to halve the battle formations (due to the connection of troops of the first and second echelons of the front at the new line), to gain time for the organized and complete mobilization of the second echelon rifle divisions. At first glance, such a decision seems prudent and even "humane". So it would have been (with the exception of the epithet "humane", which is inappropriate in the war), if it had been accepted a month before June 22. In a real situation, this course of action had significant drawbacks and created additional problems.

First of all, we recall that the Charter defines withdrawal as "the most difficult type of maneuver." Withdrawing troops 100-200 km while maintaining controllability, retaining at least some of the heavy weapons, is not an easy task. It is difficult for the infantry to break away from the pursuing motorized units of the enemy, it is impossible in principle to break away from aviation, and the troops that have left the fortifications and stretched out into a marching column turn into an ideal target for bombing strikes. Mountains of ammunition

concentrated in the border strip would inevitably have to be abandoned in this scenario (in three days it is impossible to take out by car what was brought in by wagons for three months). The defensive structures on the "old frontier" were much weaker, and there was no time to re-equip them. Finally, the moral factor cannot be discounted - after all the chatter about the invincible Red Army and "the Soviet border pillar, against which any aggressor will break his head", it was fraught with starting a war with a retreat of 200 km ...

Third option. Use your "main competitive advantage" and strike with mechanized corps on the flank and rear of the main enemy grouping. The outlines of the border created ideal conditions for this: without firing a single shot, the 4th and 8th mechanized corps hung over the deep rear of the Yug GA; the third "hero" (15th mechanized corps) along two highways (Brody, Lvov and Zolochiv, Lvov) could join them within 1-2 days. Only these three mechanized corps in the aggregate had 2.5 thousand tanks, including 720 of the latest KV and T-34.

The offensive of tank formations to the west, along the line of Rzeszow, Tarnow, and to the north, through Bilgoraj to Lublin, was practiced many times - both in the preparation of operational plans for the offensive operation of the South-Western Front, and in the course of numerous command and staff games. **[93, 153]** In the same way, "red arrows" were drawn many times and in different versions, stretching from Kovel through Chelm to Lublin. The routes of advance, lines and directions of attacks were repeatedly studied, so that "bold improvisation" in this case was not required. The 22nd mechanized corps, which advanced to Kovel, was, of course, weaker than its "southern counterparts", but at the very least 700 tanks, including

31 KV, were in its composition. The operational formation of the enemy grouping also contributed to the success of the strike of the mechanized corps. Having concentrated most of the rifle divisions at the northern base of the Lvov ledge, the Wehrmacht command inevitably weakened the flanks (see Fig. 2). In the zone of Przemysl, Sanok, the Germans had one light infantry and two security divisions, that is, about 1.5 "estimated divisions." North of Przemysl on the 40-km section of the border along the river. San, including the important road junction Yaroslav, the Germans had only two infantry divisions. In the direction of Luboml, Chelm, two infantry divisions of the Wehrmacht were to provide 50 km of the front. The situation was aggravated by the fact that the German command did not expect a counterattack by the enemy's large mechanical units (see the previous chapter, "Bert's plan"), the size of the Soviet tank group was estimated to be half the real one, and about the existence of the KV and T-34 tanks, invulnerable to the main German anti-tank 37-mm gun, did not even guess.

If the real combat readiness of the mechanized corps of the Red Army corresponded to their technical equipment, then the matter would have ended with the encirclement and defeat of the German GA "South" with obvious consequences, not of an operational, but of a strategic scale, for the entire Wehrmacht grouping on the Eastern Front. Taking into account our current knowledge of the combat capability of the Red Army, the qualifications of its commanders and the readiness to fight its fighters, it can be stated with indisputable certainty that the counteroffensive of the mechanized corps would have ended in their complete defeat, the loss of all combat materiel, the death or capture of p

But the Germans would have to pay for such a result. To pay with a temporary loss of initiative, disruption of the schedule of a carefully planned offensive operation. To pay with serious losses of their own tank divisions, for which the oncoming battle with seven hundred new Soviet tanks did not bode well. Pay with embezzlement

reserves of the Army Group (already very small), without which it would be impossible to ensure the build-up of forces in the future during the offensive in the depths of Soviet territory. Ultimately, having lost 5-7 days to "grind" the Soviet armored horde, the Wehrmacht could resume its offensive east of the Bug in early July. By that time, he would have been opposed by 15–20 fully mobilized rifle divisions of the South-Western Front. And this is a completely different "scenario" of a border battle, most likely with a qualitatively different outcome.

### **First decisions and**

**assessments** Which of the options described above did the command of the Southwestern Front choose? All three, without exception. In the following sequence: "third", "first", "second". An attempt to strike with mechanized corps on Lublin, which was cut off, and did not begin. Then - an attempt to hold the line of fortified areas with a "thread" of rifle divisions of the first echelon of the front. And only after that - the withdrawal of the defeated remnants of the troops of the front to the line of the "old border".

On the evening of June 22, at 21.15, Directive No. 3 of the Main Military Council of the Red Army, signed by the entire "trinity" of Timoshenko, Zhukov and Malenkov, was sent from Moscow to the headquarters of the fronts. In terms of the southern flank of the front of the war, the following tasks were set:

***"... d) To the armies of the Southwestern Front, firmly holding the state border with Hungary (i.e. the southern contour of the Lvov ledge. - M.S. ) concentric strikes in , the general direction to Lublin by the forces of the 5th and 6th Armies, at least five mechanized corps (highlighted by me. - M.S. ) and all front aviation , encircle and destroy the enemy grouping advancing on the Vladimir-Volynsky, Krystynopol front, by the end of 24.6, capture the Lublin region. Securely provide for yourself from the direction of Krakow."* [154]** That, in fact, is all. By issuing this Directive, the

counter-offensive of the mechanized corps of the South-Western Front was exhausted, without having begun. Not a single tank platoon crossed the border at any point. So far no one has found any documents (orders, combat reports) indicating that they even tried to fulfill the Directive of the GVS, at least they were preparing for its implementation. And this is all the more strange because one of the drafters and "signers" of Directive No. 3, the Chief of the General Staff, General of the Army Zhukov, arrived in Kiev late in the evening of June 22, and then to Tarnopol, where, starting from June 19, the headquarters of the South-Western Front moved [ 56].

What was it? Leaving the reader to come up with any plausible, in his opinion, version of this failed event, let's turn to the consideration of real actions. And the real action

The commands and headquarters of the formations of the front were reduced to the fact that they opened the "red packages" and tried to start implementing the cover plan. A characteristic detail is that Marshal Bagramyan (at that time a colonel, head of the operational department of the SWF headquarters), even 30 years later, titled the corresponding chapter of his memoirs exactly like this: "**KOVO-41 comes into force**". [155] But the cover plan for the mobilization, concentration and deployment of troops was, by definition, unsuitable for the situation that began with the invasion of the enemy in the war, and attempts to act in strict accordance with it only aggravated this situation.

It was further aggravated by the lack of an adequate assessment of the grouping and plans of the enemy. On the first day of the war, the number of enemy troops committed to battle was significantly underestimated (which served as the basis for an unjustifiably complacent assessment of the situation at the front). So, in Operational Report No. 01, by 18-00 on June 22, the headquarters of the 6th Army revealed in front of the front of the 3rd cavalry division (see Fig. 3) "**up to an infantry regiment with a company of tanks**" (in fact, there was one infantry division), in the strip of the Rava-Russian fortified area "**up to an infantry division with a battalion of tanks**" (actually - three infantry divisions, it is possible to participate in battle and one

division of "assault guns"). [156] By the morning of June 24, the content of the reports of the Soviet command came into line with the actual number of enemy infantry divisions on the front of the 5th and 6th Armies of the South-Western Front, but then a new misfortune began - a multiple overestimation of the number of enemy tanks. The operational report of the front headquarters No. 05 by 20-00 on June 24 reports the presence on the Vlodava, Sokal front (i.e., in the band of the 5th Army) "**over 2000 tanks**" - this despite the fact that at that time they were actually put into battle three (11th, 13th and 14th) and the fourth (16th) Wehrmacht tank divisions, one and a half hundred tanks each, began to advance across the border. [158]

And that is not all. In addition to overestimating the size of the real tank grouping of the enemy, a non-existent one was also "discovered". The intelligence report of the headquarters of the front number 2 by 22-00 on June 23 reports that "**on the highway from Brest to Kovel at 6 o'clock the advance of tanks was noted, the number was not established.**" [159] The next day, in Opersvodka No. 05 mentioned above, the following was already said about these mythical tanks: "**Large enemy mechanized formations are operating in the Brest-Kovel direction; at 17:15, the tank column approached Ratno with its head, Velikorita with its tail.** Between Ratno (this is a settlement in the Ukrainian Polesie, near the upper reaches of the Pripyat River) and Velikorit (and this is already in the Brest region of Belarus) 45 km along the highway. Here it is still necessary to clarify that, according to German standards, a tank regiment in motion at a speed of 15 km / h

has a column length of 8380 m, respectively, several tank divisions could be located on a 45 km section. [160]

"The system is characterized not by errors, but by the reaction to errors." Mistakes in intelligence work in war are absolutely inevitable, commanders always have to make decisions based on incomplete and often erroneous information. There is nothing supernatural in the fact that someone somewhere imagined a giant column of enemy tanks, no. Another thing is strange - from Kovel (the headquarters of the 5th Army and the headquarters of the 15th rifle corps were located in that area) to Ratno 50 km along the highway. A scout squad on motorcycles could travel back and forth in 2 hours. "Kukuruznik" U-2 could fly to Ratno and land in any clearing near the headquarters near Kovel in an hour. In reality, it took the reconnaissance of the South-Western Front four days for it to be finally recognized in Intelligence Report No. 7 on June 27 with bashful reservations: "***Information about the action of large motorized units from the direction of Brest to Kovel was not confirmed. Small infantry and cavalry units with a small number of tanks operate here.***"

[161] There was, unfortunately, another

circumstance that prevented the SWF command from making adequate decisions. Let's call it the Tyulenev factor. On the afternoon of June 21, a decision was made in Moscow to form the Southern Front. The front was deployed on the basis of formations, mainly of the Odessa Military District, but it was decided to deploy its headquarters in Vinnitsa, that is, on the territory of the Kyiv Regional Military District. This paradox, most likely, was explained by the fact that the main task of the new front was to be the cover of the direction of Mogilev-Podolsky, Vinnitsa, i.e., the southern base of the Lvov ledge. (Fig. 12.) Be that as it may, a "third commander" appeared on the Southwestern Front (in addition to Kirponos and Zhukov). They became the former commander of the Moscow Military District, now the commander of the troops of the Southern Front, General of the Army Tyulenev.



Rice. 12. Odessa Military District

According to the formal criteria of the front, Tyulenev was only one step higher than the Kirponos front (army general versus colonel general). According to the unspoken "table of ranks", their status was simply incommensurable. Tyulenev is an officially recognized "hero of the Civil War", and not just a hero with three (!) Orders of the Red Banner, but a "first horseman", a personal friend of Marshal Budyonny (in the 1st Cavalry Tyulenev was the head of the intelligence department). In 1930, Tyulenev became the commander of the Special Cavalry Brigade. Stalin, then served in the central apparatus of the People's Commissariat of Defense, since 1938 he was the commander of the Transcaucasian Military District and a member of the Military Council under the People's Commissar of Defense. Finally

In August 1940, Stalin appointed Tyulenev commander of the capital's military district, i.e., entrusted him with the protection of his life and power. To such an authoritative commander and member of the Military Council of the Southern Front, they appointed not just anyone, but the former head of the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army (deputy people's commissar of defense ex officio) comrade. Zaporozhets.

Arriving in Vinnitsa, Tyulenev and Zaporozhets began to bombard Moscow with reports, and then with personal letters from Comrade. Stalin, in which they reported on the countless hordes of the enemy that had gathered near the Soviet-Romanian border. (Fig. 13.) For the sake of truth, we must immediately emphasize that they were not the first to come up with this! Completely inadequate estimates of the size of the Wehrmacht grouping in Romania were given earlier. So, in the Special Communication of the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of May 31, 1941, the number of German (specifically German, and not "German-Romanian") troops in the border zone ( "in **Moldova and Northern Dobruja**") was determined in 17 divisions, including 2 tank and 4 motorized; in addition, **"in the Carpathian Ukraine"** (i.e., in the territory occupied at that time by the Hungarians) 4 German divisions were found, and **"in the center of Romania (Bucharest and to the west of it)"** another 11 divisions of the reserve of the Wehrmacht Civil Code. [162]

With the outbreak of the war, the numbers crept up. Intelligence report No. 1/660724 of the General Staff of the Red Army dated 20.00 on June 22 reported that **"in Slovakia and Carpathian Ukraine, the number of German troops is 13-15 divisions; Romania has 33-35 divisions, of which 4 armored, 11 motorized and 1 mountain infantry ."** Intelligence report No. 3/660739 dated 20-00 June 24 slightly reduced these fantastic estimates: **"The total enemy grouping in front of our Southern Front is 15 German divisions, of which 6 are infantry, 7 motorized, 2 tank. In the area of Bucharest, Ploiesti, Pitesti, front-line reserves consisting of 15 German divisions are expected.** [163] In fact, the 11th

Wehrmacht Army deployed in Romania had 7 (seven) infantry divisions and a single (190th) division of self-propelled "assault guns". In Hungary, there was not a single German division at all. The commander of the Southern Front could, having arrived at the scene and dealt with the situation, stop this disinformation. Alas, instead, on July 1 at 7:50 pm, he sends a report to Stalin and Timoshenko, in which he assesses the situation on two fronts (one of which he was not assigned to lead) as follows:

**"The enemy by the end of the day 30.6. created two main shock operational groups: the Rovno-Brodsky mobile group against the South-Western Front and the second, Botosani-Yassky, determined by us in**



**15-16 infantry divisions, 2-3 armored and up to 4 mechanized divisions. The operational position of these groups allows us to conclude that opponent seek ~~presently~~ <sup>possibly</sup> double strike ~~with~~ <sup>apply</sup> both groups; a) a short one in the directions of Brody, Tarnopol and Chernivtsi, Tarnopol, b) at the same time a deep blow in the directions of Rovno, Berdichev and Botoshan, Vinnitsa ... The absence of front-line operational reserves makes us express fear for the Vinnitsa direction with all the ensuing consequences for the Southwestern Front ... " [164]**

Ц А Подана 5.7.41. 20.38 Принята 5.7.41. 21.03.  
 5.7.41. 22.45. 5  
 ие 8 отдела оперупра Генштаба Красной Армии

Пр I № 723 /наш № 40550/.

3. Общая численность войск противника перед Южным фронтом /до 40 пехотных дивизий, до 3-х танковых дивизий, до 10 мех.дивизий/ дает ему общее превосходство в живой силе в 3-4 раза, в технике - в 2-2,5 раза при имеющейся средней оперативной плотности наших войск - одна стр.дивизия на 70-80 километров.

В направлении возможного главного удара /в Винницком/ противник имеет возможность создать еще большую плотность.

Rice. 13. Report of the Command of the Southern Front to Stalin

In the next message to Stalin (dated July 5), Tyulenev and Zaporozhets paint a completely gloomy picture: ***"The total number of enemy troops in front of the Southern Front (up to 40 infantry divisions, up to 3 tank divisions, up to 10 motorized divisions) gives him an overall superiority in manpower 3-4 times, in technology - 2-2.5 times with the existing average operational density of our troops - one rifle division per 70-80 km ... The armies of the Southern Front have the ability to carry out the task assigned to them by the method***

***mobile defense*** (i.e., continuously retreating. - ***M.S.*** ), ***relying on the fortified area of the river. Dniester...***” [165]

Here, of course, we must remember that, in addition to the seven divisions of the Wehrmacht, there was also the Romanian army in front of the Southern Front [57]. In terms of nominal strength, the grouping of Romanian troops was very solid: 13 infantry divisions, 1 armored division, 3 mountain infantry and 3 cavalry brigades, a total of about 17 "estimated divisions". In terms of the number of personnel (17.7 thousand people), the Romanian division even surpassed the infantry division of the Wehrmacht.

Did the real combat potential of the Romanian army correspond to such a size? On this occasion, different opinions and assessments were expressed. Tyulenev in his reports, as we see, did not distinguish between German and Romanian infantry formations at all, by default recognizing in this way that the Romanian division is not inferior to the German one. Hitler's value judgment was completely different: ***“No illusions about the allies ... Nothing can be expected from the Romanians at all. Perhaps they will only be able to defend themselves under the cover of a strong barrier (river), and even then only where the enemy will not attack. Antonescu increased his land army instead of reducing it and improving it.”*** [166] On the other hand, on the

eve of the war, the troops of the Odessa Military District included 13 rifle, 3 cavalry, 4 tank and 2 motorized divisions, a very powerful artillery group (13 separate artillery regiments, including 5 high-power howitzers). [140] The aviation of the Odessa Military District, in terms of the number of aircraft, was twice as large as the German-Romanian aviation grouping opposing it (and this is without taking into account the Air Force of the Black Sea Fleet and the 4th Corps of the DBA in Zaporozhye). According to all the canons of military science, the troops of the Odessa Military District, relying on two powerful natural defensive lines (the Prut and Dniester rivers in their lower reaches) and hundreds of pillboxes of Kamenetz-Podolsky and Mogilev-Podolsky URs, could provide a stable defense against 7 German and

17 Romanian divisions. Tyulenev, however, judged differently, and, pushed by his defeatist reports, the Headquarters of the Civil Code began to transfer to the Southern Front one after another the formations of the South-Western Front: the 17th Rifle Corps (left, eastern flank of the 12th Army), 55th rifle corps (reserve command of the South-Western Front), 16th mechanized corps (12th Army), 4th PTABR. Strictly speaking, this "transfer" did not mean the movement of troops in space, all (or almost all) remained in their places, but now about the use of these troops to strengthen the defense of the 5th and 6th Armies

caught under the "steel rink" of the main strike force of the Wehrmacht, there was no question. The end result

of such "operational art" was a crushing defeat. The right (northern) flank of the Southern Front, made up of former formations of the South-Western Front, almost without a fight surrendered to the Romanians (not a single German division was there) Northern Bukovina; Chernivtsi was occupied on July 5, on the third (!) day of the enemy offensive. It took three weeks for the Romanian-German troops to occupy most of Bessarabia and cross the Dniester. On July 25, the Stavka transferred the randomly retreating troops of the 6th and 12th Armies of the Southwestern Front to the Southern Front (by that time, all the remnants of the 26th Army had also been transferred to the 12th Army). As part of the Law Firm, they were surrounded and destroyed in the Uman region.

## Chapter 2.2 Lvov

Let us return, however, to the first days of the war and to the troops of the first echelon of the Southwestern Front. We will begin the description of the short and sad history of their defeat with the fighting on the Lvov ledge, that is, in the offensive zone of the 17th Wehrmacht Army. At the initial stage of the operation, she was faced with the task of linking up the troops of the 6th, 26th and 12th Armies of the South-Western Front, preventing their transfer to the main strike zone, occupying the most important road junction (Lvov), and

providing conditions for entering the 14- th tank corps. It makes sense to say a few words about the conditions of the terrain on which the battle took place (see Fig. 3). Three roads lead to the historical capital of Galicia: the "northern" (Tomaszow, Zholkiew, Lviv) and two "western" (Radymno, Yavoriv, Lvov and Przemyśl, Grudek-Yagellonsky, Lvov). The area south of the Przemyśl-Lvov road is heavily swamped, cut through by numerous tributaries of the Dniester; the movement of large masses of troops there is hardly possible. The strip of terrain to the west of the "northern road", from Janow to Nemyriv and further across the territory of Poland to Bilgoraj, is an array of dense forest, swampy in places. To the east of the "northern road" the area is open, but dotted with numerous small rivers, tributaries of the river. Bug. The strip between the two "western roads" is a hilly hill covered with forest; the army advancing in this direction will have to force (not to mention the border river San) two water barriers: the river. Cherry and r. Vereshchytsia, which in the region of Grudek-Jagiellonsky, Luben Wielki [58] is a chain of lakes connected by channels.

Probably, it was precisely in view of these circumstances that the command of the 17th Army of the Wehrmacht decided to deliver the main blow along the "northern road", along the shortest and relatively passable direction to Lvov. The 4th Army (infantry) corps was concentrated there, consisting of the 71st, 295th, 24th, 262nd infantry divisions; the corps was given the only division of self-propelled "assault guns" in the 17th Army and a battalion of flamethrower tanks (this unit was supposed to be used to suppress the bunkers of the Rava-Russian fortified area). From the west, from the "point" of the ledge to Lvov, the 49th Mountain Infantry Corps (1st Mountain Infantry, 68th and 257th Infantry Divisions) advanced. The 101st light infantry division was to take the border Przemyśl and advance along the road to Sudova Vyshnia, Lvov.

### **The first two days**

In the first hours of the war, the situation in the offensive zone of the 17th Army (as, indeed, on the entire Eastern Front) caused a surge of euphoria among the German command: **"6.00. Along the entire**

**width of the front, our corps encounter only weak resistance, battles are fought at first only with the enemy's border troops. Apparently, the enemy was taken by surprise. Bridge [over the river. San] near Przemyśl was not blown up, the bridge near the town of Radymno is in our hands in good condition. The offensive is developing everywhere without interference ... 10.15. The enemy is taken by surprise. The**

**border fortifications are only partly occupied by enemy troops. The resistance is getting stronger, but remains chaotic...**

### **11.30. The railway bridge in the Przemyśl region was captured. [167]**

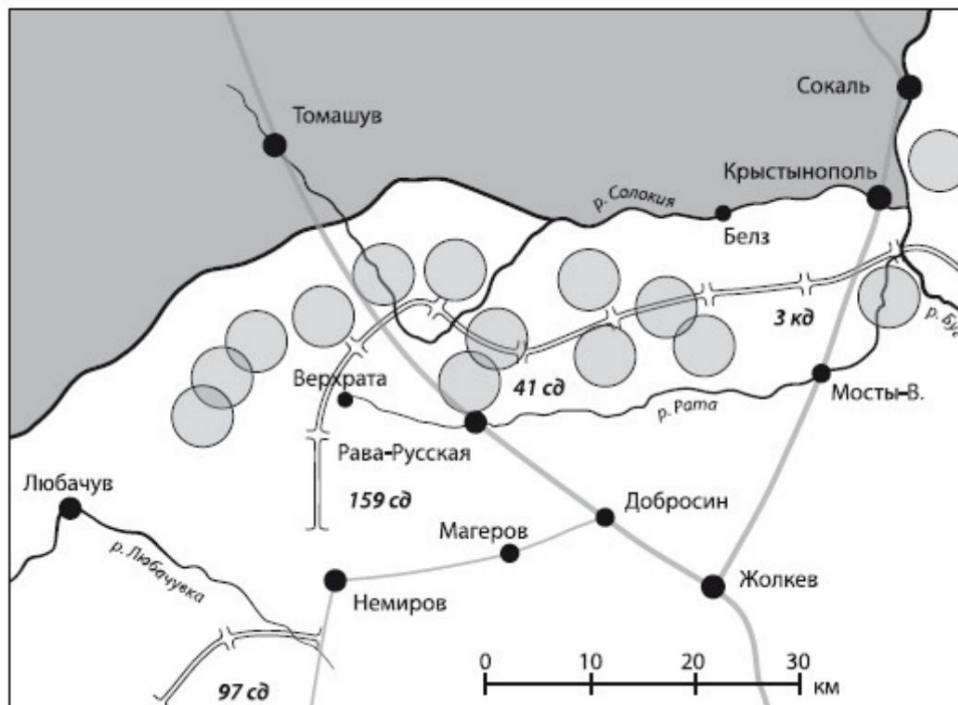
Confidence that the "chaotic resistance" would be broken in the coming hours was so great that at 11.15 the command of the 17th Army proposed "to bring **14 TK into battle either in the afternoon or in the first half of the next day, 23.06. 41. The command of the GA "South" agrees with this opinion. [167]** In reality, the Germans managed to introduce 14 TK into the breach only on the evening of June 28; the command of the Wehrmacht did not appreciate the Rava-Russian fortified area, and most importantly, the 41st Rifle Division of Major General Mikushev, who took up defense there [59]. Even in the situation of an unexpected

(for Stalin) attack, formations of the 6th Army of the South-Western Front entered the battle in a fairly organized manner [60]. As early as June 20, the army commander, Lieutenant General Muzychenko, gave the order: **"The headquarters of corps, divisions, regiments are in place. Do not leave the area of deployment anywhere. For any exercises related to separation from the area of deployment, seek permission from the Military Council ... Urgently recall the anti-aircraft divisions from the Lviv camp assembly to their formations, upon arrival, set the task of covering the position of the divisions from the air ... "[168]** In the 41st Infantry Division, this the order was carried out exactly, the artillery units that were on the ranges were returned to the division, the command staff, thanks to the established interaction with the border guards, was alerted at 2 am. Ultimately, units of the 41st Rifle Division managed to take up defensive positions before the enemy could reach the front line of the Rava Russian UR. According to the construction plan, the fortified area was supposed to consist of 306 (!) Combat structures grouped in 13 defense nodes

("supporting

points"). By the time the war began, about 150 bunkers had been built; armored loopholes, weapons, air pumping and filtering installations were installed in about 90 bunkers. True, the armament was far from being installed in full, nevertheless, 8 cannons of 76 mm caliber, 52 cannons of 45 mm caliber and 181 heavy machine guns, covered with a 2-meter layer of fortified reinforced concrete, were already waiting for the advancing enemy infantry. [41, 42] Defensive positions were also equipped in advance - with trenches, bunkers and dugouts - for the 41st Infantry Division, which constituted the "infantry filling of the UR". (Fig. 14.) In the middle of the day, the 209th corps artillery regiment (36 howitzers of 152 mm caliber) approached Rava-Russkaya to reinforce the 41st Rifle Division. This is a serious force, in terms of "the weight

of a single salvo" one such regiment surpassed the Wehrmacht infantry division. Noteworthy is the pace at which low-speed (which some modern historians especially like to emphasize) tractors dragged heavy howitzers from the town of Shklo (10 km east of Yavorov) to Rava-Russkaya (32 km in a straight line, but tractors do not fly in a straight line through a swampy forest) . The next day, June 23, the even more powerful 135th RGK artillery regiment (24 122 mm caliber guns and 24 152 mm howitzer guns) was attached to the 41st Division.



Rice. 14. Rava-Russian fortified area By

the evening of June 22, the mood at the headquarters of the 17th Wehrmacht Army began

change:

***“19.30. On the evening of June 22, the enemy managed to break through the battle formations of our troops on the right flank of the 262nd Infantry Division***

***in the area northwest of Rava Russkaya ... 20.00. The dangerous situation on the left flank of 4 AK is even more complicated. 4 AK pulls up reserves that are directly subordinate to the command of the corps ...***

***General summary of the day... strong enemy counterattacks from the forests northwest and northeast of Rava-Russkaya...” [167]***

The next day, the eyes widened so much from fear that even 150 non-existent tanks were reflected in them: ***“13.00. 4 AC***

***reports on the concentration of enemy tank formations in the Hrebenne area with the aim of attacking the positions of 262 infantry divisions in the Kornier area*** (settlement at the southern bend of the Solokiya River, 10 km north of Rava Russkaya.

***- M.S. ). Summary of the day... Around noon, there was an accumulation of approximately 150 tanks [61] , which, with their active actions, posed a threat to the positions of 262 infantry divisions in the Cornier area ... The forces of the 5th Air Corps carried out two raids on the enemy grouping in this area ... "[10***

There is a detailed description of the military operations of the 41st Rifle Division, compiled by the former chief of staff of the division, Colonel (later Major General) Eremin. [169] His article, published in 1959 (during the brief era of the Khrushchev “thaw”), is as extraordinary (if not unique) as the history of the battles at Rava-Russkaya itself. In Eremin’s article, there is neither an “avalanche of tanks with armored personnel carriers” in the battle formations of a Wehrmacht infantry division, nor saboteurs with scissors (***“communication with the army headquarters worked without interruption”*** ), nor the ubiquitous German aviation, which “hung over the battlefield from morning to evening”, no complaints about the absence and malfunction of materiel (***“the units were replenished from the divisional warehouse with ammunition, necessary weapons and equipment up to wartime standards”*** ); enemy divisions have specific numbers, and not a single superfluous one is observed (instead of the traditional dimensionless “Germans threw more and more new formations into battle ...”). The results of the first day of the war,

as presented by the former chief of staff of the 41st Rifle Division, were like this:

***“Our units, operating on well-known terrain, encouraged by the first successes and skillfully using the benefits and advantages of defense, felt confident in pre-prepared and equipped structures, repelled all enemy attacks ... We managed to hold the decisive defensive line with relatively small losses, with***

***which they not only inflicted a very significant defeat on the enemy, but also stopped his further advance on his entire front ... Having no information about the situation on the fronts and based on successful actions on our sector, we were optimistic, believing that our troops acted at least***

***successfully..."***

No less successful was the right neighbor of Mikushev's division - the cavalry division under the command of Major General Maleev. It would seem that the cavalry division is not well suited for conducting static defense, and according to simple arithmetic, the cavalry division of the Red Army (8968 people with full staff strength) was much smaller than the 9th Wehrmacht infantry division advancing on the Belz, Krystynopol front. But the cavalry division was not simple, but the 3rd Bessarabian Red Banner Order of Lenin named after G.I. Kotovsky. As for the tank regiment (44th tank regiment), which was part of the 3rd cd, it was one of the oldest in the Red Army and led its pedigree from the "first proletarian armored division", formed back in 1917!

On the eve of the war, the 3rd Cavalry Division was stationed in the settlement. Bridges of Velka. On the afternoon of June 22, rapidly advancing north, the division counterattacked the enemy with its tank and two cavalry regiments and drove the Germans out of the area of the Parkhach railway station [62]. Subsequently, the 3rd cd, reinforced by the 491st rifle regiment of the 159th rifle division, held the defense in the interfluvium of the river. Solokia and r. Rata until the evening of 27 June. Severely violating the chronology of events, we note that the 3rd cd survived until the end of the 41st year (a unique situation for the front, twice defeated in the Uman and Kiev "cauldrons"), in December it became the 5th Guards Cavalry and in this rank reached Berlin.

Events unfolded quite differently on the front to the west of the 41st Rifle Division. The left neighbor, the 159th rifle division (without one regiment transferred to the 3rd cd), after an unsuccessful attempt to counterattack the enemy, retreated to the settlement. Verkhvata and to the south, pursued by the advancing 71st Infantry Division of the Wehrmacht. On June 23, enemy pressure intensified, and the 159th Rifle Division began a disorderly retreat, exposing the left flank of the Rava-Russian fortified area. On the morning of June 24, the advance detachment of the German 71st Infantry Division (two bicycle companies) after a short battle was occupied by Nemirov. The three leftmost strongholds of the UR were occupied by the Germans, who began the methodical destruction of blocked bunkers. In the Combat

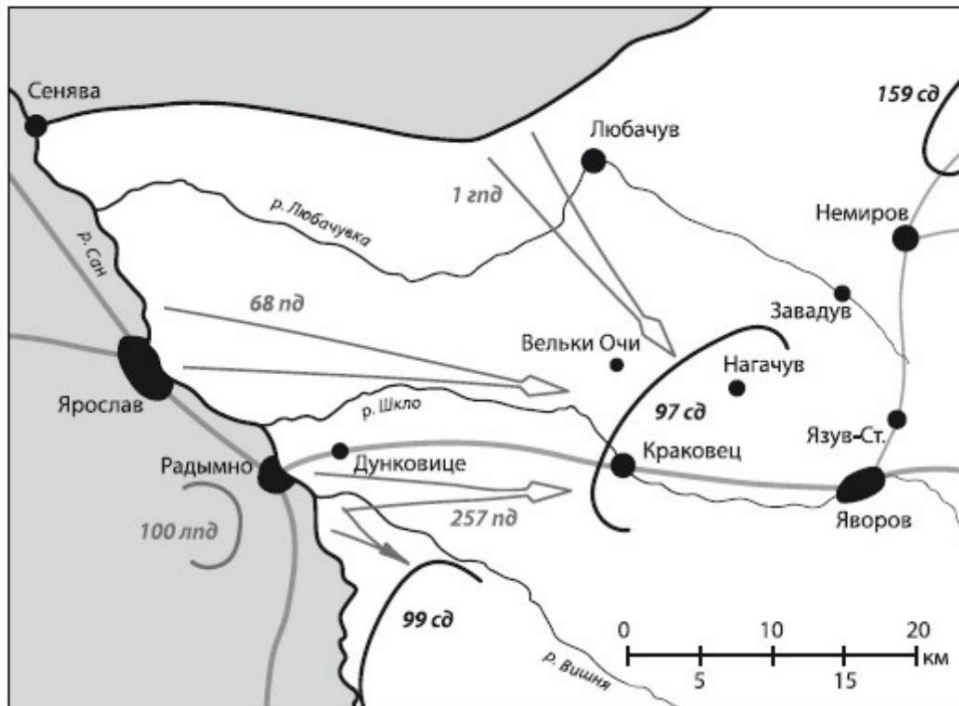
Journal of the 17th Wehrmacht Army we read: ***"June 23. General summary for the day ... In the afternoon, two fortified strongholds of the enemy were taken in the area of \u200b\u200bBrusno and Velky Dzyal ...***



**June 24. 15.00. Exceptionally fierce resistance and stubborn enemy counterattacks... An example is the behavior of the bunker garrison near Brusno. After the Russian soldiers realized the hopelessness of further resistance, they shot themselves. One Russian soldier who passed on the German demand to cease resistance and surrender was shot dead by the commander of the bunker garrison ... "[ 167]** The command of the 17th Army and the 4th

Army Corps of the Wehrmacht quickly assessed the situation. On the evening of June 23, orders were given, in accordance with which two fresh divisions were transferred from the Army reserve to the Rava-Russkoe direction: the 296th Infantry and the 97th Light Infantry. A frontal attack on the fortified area along the Tomaszow, Zholkiew highway was to be carried out only by one 296th infantry division, three divisions (71 infantry division, 295 infantry division, 97 infantry division) were to, advancing from the line of Verkhvat, Nemirov, bypass the fortified area from the south; The 24th Infantry Division and the 262nd Infantry Division continued their offensive on the right flank of the UR. In total, six (!) Wehrmacht divisions were chained to the 41st Rifle Division and the remnants of the 159th Rifle Division; hardly anything like that was observed along the entire length of the Ea

Incomparably more successful (for the Germans) was the offensive of the 49th Mountain Infantry Corps. All bridges and crossings on the river. The San were captured without a fight. At 06.40 (Berlin time, "Soviet" was 1 hour more), the corps headquarters states: **"The enemy did not fire a single artillery shot throughout the entire space."** By 3 p.m., the 1st Mountain Infantry Division crossed the river in several places. Lubachuvka (7–10 km south of the border). The 97th Rifle Division, which was covering the "point of the Lvov ledge" (along with the 159th and 41st, it was part of the 6th Rifle Corps of the 6th Army) switched to mobile defense, and, judging by the fact that by the end of the second On the day of the war, the Wehrmacht infantry managed to cross two rivers and advance 20–25 km into the depths of Soviet territory, this "defense" turned into a disorderly retreat. (Fig. 15.)



Rice. 15. 49th mountain infantry corps of the Wehrmacht, fighting 22-23

June

The unfortunate rule for the historian is that from the defeated units and formations there are almost (or not at all) primary documents left. So in the case of the 97th Rifle Division, the main source of information can only be the Combat Operations Journal of the 49th Code of Civil Procedure of the Wehrmacht. [170]

**“June 22,**

**20.00. Our offensive came as a complete surprise to the enemy. Only border guards offered resistance at the border. The enemy has not yet been able to create a single defensive line ...**

**June 23, 08.00. At the moment, the 68th Infantry Division is advancing at a good pace and without any opposition from the enemy ... [63] 11.30. 68 pd lost combat**

**contact with the enemy. 16.00. 257 pd periodically comes into combat contact with enemy... 22.15.**

**The enemy retreated on 23.6. along the entire front. There is a lack of organized resistance, only separate scattered groups are resisting ... ”** By the morning of June 24, due to the withdrawal

of the 97th and 159th rifle divisions, a gap formed in the defense front of the 6th Army southwest of Nemirov

10–15 km wide. There was a real threat of encirclement of the 41st Rifle Division and the exit of German troops to the Zholkev-Lvov highway. Mikushev's division and the garrisons of the pillboxes of the Rava-Russky fortified area continued the heroic and unequal struggle, but the optimism of the first day began to fade. As Eremin writes in his article, ***“among the personnel of the division, moods of impatience, annoyance and even discontent began to involuntarily arise and spread due to the lack of support from our aircraft and tanks; everyone thought***

***- where are they and why have they been gone for so long?***

Impatience and even dissatisfaction were quite understandable and justified: the division fulfilled and even overfulfilled its part of the overall work, forcing the command of the 17th Wehrmacht Army to pull six divisions to Rava-Russkaya. Miracles do not happen, and, having concentrated troops on the eastern flank, the Germans inevitably weakened their western flank, where on the “tip of the Lvov ledge”, in the strip from Lyubachev to the river. San remained scattered along the forest roads units of only two (1 GPD and 68 PPD) infantry divisions. Thus, ideal conditions were created for delivering a crushing tank strike by the forces of two mechanized corps (4 MK and 8 MK) in a northerly

Serious opportunities were also opened up by the situation in the Przemyśl direction, where the 99th Infantry Division continued to hold the city and on the evening of June 23 captured the railway bridge across the river. San. [167] Since the “southern road” (Lviv, Grudek, Przemyśl) remained in the hands of the Soviet command throughout, it could be used to concentrate mechanized formations near Przemyśl with the task of further attacking Rzeszów, in the area where the headquarters of the GA “South” was located. But

none of this was done. The real and short history of the military operations of the most powerful 4th mechanized corps in the entire Red Army goes beyond any logic.

### **81st Motorized Division The**

state of its archival files silently but eloquently testifies to the inglorious defeat of the 4th MK. The fund of the mechanized corps (TsAMO. F. 3429. Op. 1. D. 1) contains only one document. This is the so-called. “Historical form” (i.e., a brief official summary of the history of the military unit), and the last entry in the form is dated May 24, 1941. The fighting of the corps is not reflected in a single word. The 4th MK included three divisions: two armored (8th and 32nd) and one (81st) motorized. There is no fund of the 32nd TD in TsAMO. That is, not at all. The foundation of the 8th Panzer Division exists

(TsAMO. F. 3008. Op. 1. D. 3), but it does not contain a single operational document dated June 22 and later. The memoir literature will not help us much either - the corps was commanded by General Vlasov, whose very name became synonymous with betrayal in the USSR; accordingly, and those wishing to share their memories of their joint service with Vlasov are not found.

With all this, the 4th mechanized corps did not disappear without a trace: there were reports from the command of the 8th TD and 32nd TD to higher headquarters, the "reflection" of the fighting (and inaction) of the corps, recorded in the documents of the Wehrmacht, remained. Something useful can be gleaned from the "Historical Form" mentioned above. In particular, information that according to the results of 1940, 4 MK ***"among all the mechanical units and formations of the district, it took 1st place and received the Challenge Red Banner of the KOVO "For Superiority in Combat Training"***. Further, you can also get acquainted with the ratings (on a 5-point scale) that the best mechanized corps of the district received during the inspection: fire training - 3, condition and content of materiel - 3, engineering training - 3.5 and tactical training - 3.8. But with the party stratum in the corps, everything was in the best possible shape: 1884 communists, 2593 candidate members, 14,290 Komsomol members, in total - 52% of the personnel. [171]

The focus of combat training is quite expected. On September 25-29, 1940, the headquarters of the 4th MK participated in the exercises personally conducted by the people's commissar of defense on the topic "Army offensive and the introduction of the mechanized corps into the breakthrough"; from October 10 to 16 - in the exercises conducted by the Military Council of the KOVO on the topic "Entering the mechanized corps into a breakthrough, forcing a water barrier and a meeting battle." An interesting document testifies to where and what they were going to break through and force - the combat report of the chief of staff of the 81st MD dated June 30: ***"In the units and headquarters of the division there are no maps of the area from the***

***city of Lvov to the east and southeast. Please send as many copies as possible.*** [177] By the beginning of the war, 4 MK included 101 KV, 313 T-34, 75 T-28, 290 BT and 103 T-26 (including flamethrower), a total of 882 tanks, not counting the floating machine-gun tankettes. As well as 198 armored vehicles, including 89 BA-10 cannons. Total - more than a thousand units of armed armored vehicles. In terms of the number of heavy and medium tanks, the 4th mechanized corps was quite consistent with the typical Soviet Tank Army of the period 1944-1945. The only difference is that by the year 44, the Wehrmacht had already forgotten about the 37-mm "mallet", the latest for the summer of 41, the 50-mm Pak-38 anti-tank gun was removed from service everywhere and replaced by the 75-mm Pak- 40, entered serv

Pak-43; such a composition of anti-tank weapons allowed the Wehrmacht to successfully destroy attacking Soviet tanks, while in June 1941 the Wehrmacht infantry division did not have adequate weapons to fight Soviet KV and T-34 tanks.

When completing 4 MKs, they did not forget about the equipment that ensures the combat operations of tanks. The corps included 245 (according to other documents - 274) caterpillar tractors, almost three thousand cars, including 2146 trucks, 567 (according to other documents - 606) special vehicles (tankers, repair shops, etc.). And all this - even before the start of open mobilization and without taking into account the receipt of vehicles from enterprises of the national economy. In the course of covert mobilization under the cover of "training camps", the number of personnel of the 4th mechanized corps was brought up to 33.7 thousand people, i.e. up to 94% of the full staff numbers.

Such an armored "cleaver" was in the hands of the command of the Southwestern Front, such power was mediocre and ineffectually wasted during one week of the war. We will begin the description of this sad and shameful story with the "weak link" of the mechanized corps - its 81st motorized division. It just so happened that it was this unit that acted a little more actively than the other two divisions of the corps, and there were much more documents from the 81st MD left (five archival files, including combat reports of the units and the Division's Combat Operations Journal, written in hot pursuit of events). The war for the 81st motorized

division began with the order of the corps commander No. 01 dated June 22, according to which the division by 10 a.m. on June 22 had to "**finish the concentration in the forest area west of Janow and be ready for military operations in the direction: Nemirov, Radymno, Janow Przemysl.**" After that, "**parts of the division were alerted at 3.15 on June 22 and by 16.00 concentrated in the forest area 3 km west of Cape Janow.**" [172] The division's staging area—sheltered by forest from observation and attacks from enemy aircraft and in close proximity to three main roads—opened up a wide range of options for the use of the division. We note right away that on the first day of the war there were no losses from the actions of German aviation in the 81st MD.

Losses, and very tangible ones, the division suffered from the command of the 6th Army. One of the two motorized rifle regiments (202 infantry regiments) was immediately withdrawn "**for garrison service in the city of Lvov.**" One company was withdrawn from the second motorized rifle regiment (323 infantry regiment) "**to guard Shtarm-6**". To protect the same headquarters, one tank company of a tank regiment (53 tank units) of the division was also taken. It can be assumed that such extraordinary measures of the command of the 6

The armies were conditioned by the presence in Lviv and its environs of a "third force", i.e., combat groups of the Ukrainian nationalist underground. However, there were a lot of those who, on duty, were supposed to fight the armed underground in Lviv: the District School of Junior Commanders of the Border Troops, the 6th Motorized Rifle Regiment of the NKVD Operational Troops, the 66th Regiment of the 10th Division of the NKVD Troops for the Protection of Railway Facilities, 233rd (possibly, and 229th) regiment of NKVD escort troops. Yes, these regiments in terms of numbers more likely corresponded to an army rifle battalion, since in the early days of the war there were no more than a battalion of armed OUN in Lvov ... We note right away that on the evening of June 23 the command of the 6th Army Lvov" is also a motorized rifle regiment of the 8th Panzer Division. **[173]**

Further, the "disassembly" of the division into its component parts continued as follows: one rifle battalion of the 323rd MRR was sent to Radzechow in the early morning of June 23, where, together with two tank battalions of the 32nd Panzer Division, it was supposed to help units of the 15th Mechanized Corps defeat the 11th th German Panzer Division (how this happened and how it ended will be described in the next chapter), another company of the 323rd SME at 8 o'clock (either in the morning or in the evening), along with a platoon of tanks, was sent to the area of the city of Busk (65 km in a straight line to the east from the place of concentration of the division) **"with the task of destroying enemy landing groups"**. Apparently, the command of the 6th Army considered the motorized rifle division as a "big bag" with infantry companies and tank platoons, they were taken out of the bag one by one and used as needed, including the fight against the mythical "landing forces". The

actual combat operations of the division began in the afternoon of June 22, when the 2nd battalion of the 323rd SME, together with one tank company and a reconnaissance company of the 53rd tank regiment, set off along the Janow-Yavorov highway to the border. By 17-30 this battle group reached the village of Glinitsy (6 km west of Krakovets), and the reconnaissance company went even further to the west and near the settlement. Zaleska Volya stumbled upon the advancing German infantry of the 257th Infantry Division. A short battle ensued, in which (judging by the ZhBD of the 81st MD) two tanks were lost, and according to the ZhBD of the 49th mountain infantry corps of the Wehrmacht, four reconnaissance armored vehicles (Panzerspähwagen) were **hit**. On this episode, any mention of the actions and the very

existence of the "battle group" in the railway division, alas, ends. As a result of all these strange movements, the following remained under the control of the division command: one (!) rifle company, a tank regiment (by the beginning of the war it had 226 serviceable BT tanks, including 97 of the latest BT-7M with diesel engines),

staffed (36 guns), a reconnaissance battalion (which was armed with 16 armored vehicles and 13 of the latest T-40 amphibious tanks), anti-tank and anti-aircraft divisions, a communications battalion (4 motorcycles, 31 cars, 6 radio stations, 107 km of cable). [174] All this received the Order of the Mechanized Corps No. 03 dated 18-00. June 22 - be ready for a joint offensive with the 8th Panzer Division along the Yavorovsk highway to the border.

At 6-30. on the morning of June 23, the chief of staff of the tank regiment of the division signs the second Opersvodka since the beginning of the war: ***"The regiment spent the night safely in the concentration area ... The regiment is fully equipped with ammunition. The personnel are waiting for the order to fight with the presumptuous enemy. The weather, the relief [of the terrain] favors the fulfillment of the combat mission. [175]***

We did not have to wait long - the division received a new order: to advance to the area of the settlement. Dobrosin (north of Zholkev) and be ready for an offensive either on the Bridges of Velka, or on Rava-Russkaya. However, this order did not last long - at 6.30. On June 24, in accordance ***with the "verbal order of the commander of the 4th MK*** (with the start of real hostilities, written orders were for some reason replaced by oral instructions) went on the offensive in the third direction - through Magerov to Nemirov. [172]

If you believe what is written in the division's ZhBD, BT tanks (which stands for "fast tank") crawled 30 km along the forest road from Dobrosin to Nemirov for seven hours. Such a "turtle pace" could be explained by the presence of artillery towed by "low-speed tractors" [64], but this assumption is erroneous - in the same railroad division we read: "The 2nd division of 125 AP had the task of supporting the attack of 53 TP , ***didn't fire a single shot.***" About where the 1st and 3rd divisions of the artillery regiment were at the same time, the document is silent. Infantry in the division remained, as already noted, only one company (less than 200 people). Strictly speaking, the thousands of remnants of the 159th Rifle Division should have been located somewhere in the Nemirov area, but no traces of their participation in the battle are found - neither in Soviet nor in German documents.

Thus, the issue of interaction between the branches of the armed forces was, as they say, "removed" even before the battle. There remained (theoretically) the main trump card - the concentration of forces, an avalanche strike of more than two hundred tanks. Alas, two tank battalions (out of four) disappear from the description of the division's combat operations "in English", without saying goodbye, without any mention or explanation. However, even those who took part (according to the ZhBD division)

in the battle for Nemirov, the 1st and 4th battalions of a tank regiment are about 120-130 tanks. It would seem that not so little...

The description of the battle in Nemirov takes up little space in the division's railway division: **"At 14.00, the sent RO [reconnaissance detachment] by patrols did not establish the presence of the enemy in Niemirów. At 15.00, the entire detachment entered Niemirow and was unexpectedly fired upon by anti-tank guns and mortars, carefully disguised in the houses of Niemirow. By combat, the presence in Niemirow of up to an infantry battalion, up to a battery of anti-tank guns, up to two field artillery guns, up to a long-range artillery battalion was established.**

**Two battalions of the 53rd TP and the 8th rifle company of the 323rd SME of Senior Lieutenant Strukov set out to destroy the enemy Niemirów. At 17.00, as a result of the attack, the enemy in Niemirow was defeated, the remnants retreated to the west. The city was on fire. The streets are strewn with fascist corpses. Due to the small number of infantry, it was not possible to consolidate the occupied line. The tanks were withdrawn,**

**and Niemirow was abandoned ... Losses in the battle for Niemirow: 36 BT-7 tanks and up to**

**65% of the personnel of the 8th SR 323 SMEs. [172]** An extremely detailed description of the battle in Nemirov, compiled by the Germans, prevents us from believing in all this: there is a ZhBD of the 71st Infantry Division, a report from the commander of an anti-tank battalion (division) and a "history of the combat path" of the division written after the war. **[176]** It follows from these documents that by the time (14:00 "Soviet time", i.e. 13:00 according to the time accepted in the documents of the Wehrmacht), when the reconnaissance detachment of the 81st MD "did not establish the presence of the enemy", Nemirov was such a spectacle: **"The time was approaching 13.15. Nemirov was on fire from all over. There were about 35 burning Ru**

Such terrible pictures are the result of the battle that the Germans fought from 11-40 (12-40 in "Soviet time") with "heavy Russian tanks" (they were KV and T-34 from the 8th Panzer Division, which will be discussed Further). The 81st motorized division approached Nemirov clearly after (or during) the battle started in the morning by the 8th Panzer Division. Here it is also necessary to clarify that the town of Nemirov, Yavoriv district, Lviv region. - this is not Moscow, not London and not Shanghai, where 35 burning tanks can be overlooked. The population of the "city" in 1940 was 3 thousand people; by Russian standards, it cannot even be called a "big village". How could one not notice houses and tanks burning with torches there?

And we find absolutely strange information in the Operational Report of the Headquarters of the 6th Army No. 03 by 18.00 on June 24: **"4 MK is moving to the starting area along the route: 8 TD - Dobrosin, Magerov, Nemirov, Yazuv Stary; 81**



**MD - Magerov, Cherry Male, Stazhiska ...** " Magerov, Cherry Male, Stazhiska (now Starichi) - this means that the 81st MD, leaving Dobrosin, at Magerov turned due south and passed about 12 km from Nemirov. I am inclined to

assume that the Army headquarters simply did not know where they were and what the troops entrusted to them were doing; The 81st division, most likely, took part in the battle, but its forward (reconnaissance) detachment did not enter Nemirov, but into one of its "suburbs", that is, tiny villages. It is possible that the following entry in the ZhBD of the 71st Infantry Division of the Wehrmacht refers precisely to the actions of the RO: ***"In the period from 14.00 to 14.30, a second, weaker tank attack followed, then, around 16.00, another, third attack against the advancing 2nd battalion 211 -th checkpoint south of Sosnovi (a village 2 km northeast of Nemirov. - M.S. ) . And these two attacks were successfully repulsed. However, the 2nd Battalion of the 211th Infantry Division had to be withdrawn somewhat back.***

In the evening, someone attacked Nemirov again (***"About 20.00, the last tank attack on Nemirov from the east and northeast followed. It was repulsed by the fire of established defensive means. At the same time, another 10 tanks were destroyed"*** ), but to find this episode in Soviet documents failed. The

most important thing is that the enemy was not defeated by the scattered actions of the units of two Soviet divisions (8th TD and 81st MD), his "remnants" remained in Nemirov and resumed the offensive the very next day. As for the loss of tanks, in this case there is an amazing combination of data from both sides; it is surprising in that the number of destroyed Soviet tanks declared by the Germans (***"over 50"*** ) is even slightly less than the losses recognized in the documents of the Soviet divisions (19 tanks in the 8th TD and 36 tanks in the 81st MD). Be that as it may, after the loss of 36 tanks, about two hundred

tanks should have remained in the tank regiment of the 81st division. Even in the group of the 1st and 4th tank battalions that attacked Nemirov, there should have been 70-80 tanks left. However, the ZhBD of the 81st motorized division characterizes its condition as follows: ***"From 20.00, the remnants of the division (highlighted by me. - M.S. ) make a march to the district of Yazuv-Novy, Shklo."***

At that time (the evening of June 24), when scattered units of two Soviet divisions retreated from Nemirov, a fierce battle was in full swing near the town of Krakovets (see Fig. 4). The combat log of the 49th mountain infantry corps of the Wehrmacht describes it in great detail and in the most dramatic terms. The problem is that with no Soviet

it is not possible to combine this event with a document; On the evening of June 24, not a single tank unit from the divisions of the 4th mechanized corps seemed to be there - and the battle with Soviet

tanks was: “ ***At about 18.00, a crisis situation arose in the 68th infantry division. Enemy formations moving from Kokhanovka and the forests to the west and east of this settlement, with the support of artillery and tanks, attacked the formations of the division in the area of Swidnitsa and Nagaczow. The 168th reconnaissance battalion and the 3rd battalion of the 169th regiment (from the 68th infantry division) are forced to leave Swidnitsa and retreat to Skolin. Enemy tank formations located in Kokhanovka, moving on both sides of (indecipherable) through Ruda Krakovetska, attacked our units in the Krakovets area.***

***Other enemy tank units broke through the combat formations of 169 points in the area south of the highway near Rosnovka, Predborzh (now Predvorye, a settlement near the highway a few kilometers east of Krakovets. - M.S. ) and made their way into the depths up to Predborzh. 169 pp (without one battalion) is forced to retreat into the forest northwest of Rosnovka ...***

***The 525th anti-tank battalion, located in the forest 2 km southeast of Mlyna (settlement near the highway, 7 km west of Krakovets. - M.S. ) , at about 18.30 was placed at the disposal of the command of 68 infantry division in order to repel the attack of tank enemy units in the Krakovets area ... After a failed attempt to overturn our units in the Nagaczow area, units of the [Soviet] mechanized brigade, apparently, are trying to break through in a westerly direction through the Kokhanovka-Swidnica line. The officers of the corps headquarters are convinced that the 68th infantry division, in cooperation with the 1st infantry division, will be able to deliver a successful counterattack and push back the enemy that has broken***

***through ... 19.30 The corps command receives a report by phone stating that the noise of the cannonade in the eastern direction is subsiding; apparently, the source of the noise moved even further to the east...” [170]*** What was that? Who fought there?

If the reader is not completely confused in the whirlwind of numbers and dates, then he may remember that on June 22, a rifle battalion of the 323rd SME and one tank company left along the highway to the west to the border. Nothing else is said about them in the documents of the division. It is possible that it was these units that took part in the battle near Krakovets on the evening of June 24, but somehow it is hard to believe that one tank company could so excite the command of the German corps. The 8th and 32nd Panzer Divisions on the evening of June 24 seemed to be in completely different places (the 8th moved east from Nemirov to Magerov, and the 32nd was completely driven to Kamenka Bugskaya). Maybe Krakovets was attacked by the very ones who “fell out” from the railway

divisions two tank battalions of the 53rd tank regiment of the 81st md? Some indirect confirmation of this version can be the actions of Soviet tankers themselves: from Kokhanovka they attack in three different directions, and some other group advances along the highway from Rosnovka, this could happen only in the absence of a general leadership ...

The next day, June 25, was the last day of combat operations of the 81st Motorized Division. The composition of the formation had become extremely bizarre by that time: one infantry battalion (the 1st battalion of the 323rd SME returned to the division after the battle at Radzechow), an artillery regiment (seemingly in full force), an anti-tank battalion. The reconnaissance battalion with all its tankettes and armored vehicles disappears without a trace (there is no mention of its existence in subsequent June and July documents of the division). By the evening of June 25, two tank companies also enter the battle, where the rest of the tank regiment of the division was

- it is impossible to understand.

On the eve of the battle, in accordance with the order of the commander of the mechanized corps No. 007, the division became subordinate to the commander of the 6th rifle corps. Theoretically, a motorized division with a swift blow from its tank and motorized rifle subunits was supposed to attack the enemy and rescue the 97th rifle division retreating along the highway to Yavorov. In practice, the 81st MD turned into an infantry battalion with an artillery regiment, which, however, acted very weakly (***"By the beginning of the offensive of the 323rd SME, artillery preparation did not precede. The firing positions and points [of the enemy] that occupied the heights on both sides of the Yavoruw-Nakonechne highway, were not suppressed "*** . From an instant defeat, the remnants of the 81st MD were saved (for a short time) only by the fact that units of the 32nd (and maybe 8th) Panzer Division of the 4th mechanized corps, it was they who riveted the forces and attention of the enemy. In the description of the ZhBD of the 81st MD, the events developed as follows: " ***At 13.00, parts of the division attacked the***

***enemy on the eastern outskirts of Krakovets, but were unsuccessful.***

***Repeated attempts to attack the enemy were unsuccessful The 97th Rifle Division, on the front of which 323 SMEs and 84 PTDs developed their operations, began an unorganized withdrawal from 16.00, as a result, [ only] 323 SMEs remained at the front, which by this time had suffered up to 80% losses of personnel and materiel. At 19.00, under the onslaught of superior enemy forces, 323 SMEs and 84 PTDs withdrew to the Nakonechne area ...***

**At 18.00, a representative of the headquarters of the 6th Army transmitted an oral (?) order from the commander of the 6th Army: to attack the enemy north of Velke Pschedmesce (western suburb of the city of Yavorov) on Lyasek and height 280. At 18.30, two companies of tanks 53 TP went on the attack, success did not have, the actions of the tanks were independent, without the support of artillery and infantry.** And this, mind you, despite the fact that the infantry just by this time retreated to Velke Pschedmesce, and the artillery

regiment did not leave from there. Meanwhile, the enemy command planned and carried out its plan. Since the 1st Guards Division and the main forces of the 68th Infantry Division were engaged in battle north of the highway, the 257th Infantry Division was assigned to defeat the Soviet troops in the Yavorov area:

**“11.35. The concentration of large enemy forces near Yavorov forced the headquarters of the corps to give an order to 257 infantry divisions, which remained out of contact with the enemy, to urgently open fire on the artillery of the division from the Porudenko area in the Yavorov area, especially on the eastern exit from the city and road intersections ...**

**"The further fate of the instruction deserves close attention**  
"Urgently open fire."

**“13.25. 257 pd reports that for the artillery attack on Yavorov prescribed by order, a regrouping will be required, which will take about three hours. During this period of time, the shelling of Yavoriv is impossible. The offensive can be carried out by the forces of two infantry regiments. 13.40.**

**By telephone from the headquarters of the corps, an order was transmitted for 257 infantry divisions: a) 257 infantry divisions to conduct an offensive with the forces of only one regimental group, but**

**with reinforced artillery, b) the time is not earlier than 16.30. 16.25. Preliminary report from 2 absent. The division carries out artillery preparation ...**

**18.15. The corps commander allows 257 infantry divisions to storm Yavorov. In the event of a bad development of events, he assumes responsibility ... ” [170]**  
There was no

need to accept responsibility, events developed (for the Germans, of course) extremely successfully. In the mean lines of the ZhBD of the 81st MD, the defeat of the division is described as follows:

**“At 17.30. (i.e., at 16-30 "German time") enemy artillery opened fire from the area of the grove, which is south-west of Nakonechne (up to two divisions) at our artillery firing positions and transports. Artillery fire was corrected by aircraft. Our artillery was suppressed. At 20.00. a fierce battle ensued, the eastern outskirts of Nakonechne were subjected**

**to hurricane fire from enemy artillery and mortars ...**

***Transport vehicles on the highway were on fire. Artillery positions, bombarded by enemy artillery and mortar fire, were abandoned. An attempt to pull out the materiel was unsuccessful. Enemy fire did not allow them to approach the firing positions [65].***

***General leadership was interrupted. There was no communication with the units. The units that broke through to the Yavoruv area were met by enemy fire*** (that is, units of the 257th Infantry Division that approached from the south - *M.S.* ) . ***Part of the combat units of the 97th SD continued to withdraw in the direction of Javoruw. They were followed by units of 323 SMEs and 125 AP, leaving the materiel. Measures were taken by the command to detain the departing units, but these measures were difficult to carry out*** (translated into human language, a stampede began).

***A group of commanders with the remnants of 323 SMEs took up all-round defense and held on until the morning. The fierce firing of artillery, mortars and machine guns, which began at 18.30 on June 25, did not stop by the morning. From all sides, shells and mines of the enemy poured into a small ring, in which the remnants of the units were enclosed. An attempt to break through to Javoruw was unsuccessful ... A group under the command of [division commander] Colonel Vyrypaev, leaving in the direction of Lyasek, was also met with heavy enemy fire. Only individuals and small groups broke out of this ring by the evening of 26.6 and the***

***morning of 27.6 ...*** " Among those who did not break out of the ring: the division commander, his deputy, the division chief of staff, the head of the operational department of the headquarters, the head of the intelligence department of the headquarters, the chief of staff artillery division, commander of the 323rd MRR, chief of staff of the 323rd MRR, his deputy, commander of the 125th artillery regiment, his deputy ... Nominally, the division still existed, by the end of the day on June 27, the 202nd MRR was returned to its composition (task for order in Lvov had become irrelevant by that time), new commanders were appointed - but all this was only a pale shadow of the powerful motorized unit that the

81st MD was just five

days ago. **8th Panzer Division** The main striking force of the mechanized corps was, of course, the tank divisions (from the motorized division - in the case of using the mechanized corps as a well-coordinated mechanism, and not a "bag" with battalions and companies - it was only necessary to support the main attack and gain a foothold in the occupied terrain ). The main component of the 4th mechanized corps was (should have become) the old personnel 8th tank division. The division was created on the basis of the 24th tank brigade

campaign "1939. The division was commanded by Colonel Fotchenkov, a participant in the war in Spain, holder of the Order of

Lenin. Armed and equipped, the 8th TD was at a level that other tank divisions of the Red Army could only dream of. The basis of armament was the latest tanks: 50 KV and 140 T-34. A very weighty "argument" in the battle with the enemy's infantry (and the Germans did not have anything other than infantry divisions on the "Lvov ledge") should have been 60 three-turreted T-28 tanks [66]. Just an addition to such an abundance look "hopelessly outdated" (according to Soviet historians) light tanks: 26 BT-7, 20 T-26 and 16 KhT-26 flamethrower. **[178]** Total: 312 tanks, and only serviceable tanks ("1st and 2nd categories") are taken into account here. Tanks are just the beginning of a long list. In addition to them, by the beginning of the war, the division had 57 BA-10

cannon armored vehicles, 39 light armored vehicles, 84 tracked tractors (including 30 of the latest Voroshilovtsy with a 400-horsepower diesel engine), 78 tankers of various types, 967 trucks (mostly 3- ton "ZIS"), 135 special vehicles (including 24 vehicles of the pontoon-bridge park, a cinema mover, a printing house, showers and a disinfection chamber, as well as a "boat transport vehicle"), 38 cars, 177 motorcycles. We especially note the presence of 12 radios on a car chassis, including two powerful SSBs with a communication range of

hundreds of kilometers.

The report on the combat operations of the 8th TD (signed by the deputy division commander, senior battalion commissar Podporinov and deputy chief of staff captain Shabalin) begins with an interesting phrase: "The 8th ***tank division began to enter the area of concentration by order of the 4th mechanized corps on June 18 1941***". **[173]** 18 June. Four days before the surprise German attack on the USSR. In the documents of the Baltic OVO this date (June 18) occurs many times, but in the Kiev OVO this is the only such case that I have found so far.

We read further: "***On June 21, 1941, in the forests east of Janow, the following were concentrated: the 8th motorized rifle regiment, the 15th and 16th tank regiments and the 8th howitzer-artillery regiment in full strength, the rest of the division until 06/22/41 were in Lvov. On June 22, by order of the 4th MK, the rest of the division was withdrawn from Lvov to the area of concentration for mobilization. The complete withdrawal of the division's units was carried out by 16.00 on 22.06.41, where the complete mobilization was carried out*** (highlighted by me. - ***M.S.*** ) ***and the division's units were put into battle.***

So, a full-fledged, well-armed division, promptly alerted and fully mobilized, is ready for battle. One can argue for a long time about whether there was "suddenness", and if there was, then for whom and what turned out to be sudden, but to the 8th Panzer Division all these

disputes are irrelevant.

As noted above, the report on the combat operations of the division was drawn up in August, when the course and outcome of these operations was already known for certain. Only this circumstance can explain the completely enchanting phrase in which the compilers of the report outlined the task of the division: ***"Deceive the enemy by creating an opinion about the presence of a large number of tank formations in the sector of the 6 flank of the army on the other. The goal was achieved by performing large maneuvers of the division for 23-26.06.41.*** The maneuvers were great, no doubt (see incl., fig. 5). However, the division was armed with the latest tanks not at all in order to limit its use to the role of a "garden scarecrow".

Combat order No. 001 of the commander of the 6th Army was issued on the night of June 22-23. [179] At that moment, the greatest concern of the Army command was a possible strike by German tanks that had broken through the front of the neighboring 5th Army to the south, along the Mosty-Velki, Zholkiew, Lvov highway. Accordingly, the 4th mechanized corps was ordered ***"to detain the enemy, in the event of his breakthrough in the area of \u200bMosty-Velki, by the morning of 23.6.41, throw motorized infantry to the line of Zheldets, Turynka ( settlement near the highway, about 10 km north of Zholkev - M.S. )"***. In pursuance of this order, the motorized rifle regiment of the 8th Panzer Division advanced to the indicated line, did not meet the enemy (the 48th Panzer Corps of the Wehrmacht at that time was developing an offensive strictly to the east, to Radzechow and Berestechko) and at 18-30 "departed at the disposal of the ***Commander -6 to the Bzhukhovice area*** (north-western suburb of Lviv. - ***M.S. )***". [173]

Departed and more at the disposal of the division did not return; thus, even before the start of active hostilities, the 8th TD was left without infantry. This fact (like any other, by the way) should be assessed in the context of real events: if the 8th Panzer went on a deep raid, 100-200 km into the depth of the enemy's defenses (this is exactly what the German Panzers did in June 41 divisions), then the absence of their own motorized infantry could be disastrous; in reality, until the moment of its final disintegration, the division operated in the defense zone of its troops, and there were (more correctly, should have been) infantry there much more than one regiment.

The next order (No. 002) of the command of the 6th Army was issued on June 24 (the exact time is not indicated in the document). This time, the 4th MK finally had to do what the mechanized corps was created for and what it was preparing for. In strict accordance with the theme of the pre-war exercises ("oncoming battle and forcing a water barrier"), the corps was ordered **"in cooperation with the 97th rifle division at 14.00 on 24.6.41 to strike in the direction of Nagaczow, Zaleska Wola** (n. Yavorovsky highway, 10 km east of the border. - **M.S.** ) , **defeat the enemy, throwing him over the river. San". [180]** . Do not try to find the corresponding "arrows" in fig. 5. Not a single division of the 4th MK could even reach the starting point (the town of Nagaczow) of the planned offensive.

In the report on the hostilities of the 8th TD, the events of the day on June 24 are described extremely succinctly:

**"The 15th tank regiment, when making a march to Yazow Stary, fought with enemy units in the Nemirow area, destroying up to an infantry battalion, 10-12 anti-tank guns, 1 artillery battery, 10 heavy machine guns, while losing 19**

**T-34 tanks . 16 TP did not participate in battles. SMEs performed the task of restoring order in the mountain approaches to Lvov from the western direction. [173]**

Now let's try to understand what it all means. The division has four regiments (two armored, artillery and rifle). Only one performs a combat mission. The artillery regiment is not mentioned at all, the inactivity of one of the two tank regiments is not worthy of any explanation. Further, how, moving from the division's concentration area (a forest 7 km northeast of Janow) to Yazów Stary, could one find himself near Nemirov? It is known from German documents that Soviet tanks approached Nemirov from the east, along the road from Magerovo, but how and why they got on this road is not clear. The question here is not in geography, but in arithmetic - what fought the battle at Nemirov is completely different from a tank regiment. Let us turn again to the Journal of Combat Operations of the 71st Infantry Division of the Wehrmacht:

**"11.40 ... Immediate occupation of positions by all cash anti-tank weapons (approximately two 50-mm anti-tank guns and eight 37-mm anti-tank guns). One tank breaks into Nemirov and turns north, towards Vrublyachyn** (a settlement a few kilometers northeast of Nemirov. - **M.S.** ). **Significant losses of materiel, crushed and shot tank.**

**At a distance of 1 km, about 18 tanks followed in close formation, the first of which was destroyed point-blank by anti-tank fire on Nemirov's market square. It blocks the road to the north. In this regard, the following**



**tanks turn south and at the exit from the city they meet with the marching 171st anti-tank battalion** (unit of the 71st infantry division), **which immediately takes up positions and destroys several tanks. The 8**

**tanks following in a marching column on the outskirts of the city were intercepted by anti-tank guns and stopped by the first lined tank that blocked the road. They were burned one by one with the help of anti-tank rifles, anti-tank rifles and**

**machine guns [67]. 4 tanks moving at the end of the general column of the tank deviated from the suburbs to the north and through the fields attacked the northern outskirts of Nemirov. Approximately 500 m in front of the city, they were shot by anti-tank guns and infantry guns** (in the Wehrmacht, this term denoted short-barreled 75-mm and 150-mm guns. - **M.S.** ).

**The attack of these last tanks is followed by a weak infantry attack, which was stopped about 1 km northeast of Nemirov (time - about 13.00) ... " 1, 18, 8, 4**

tanks. Even if these numbers are summed up, then half of the tank battalion will barely be recruited, but it is not necessary to sum them up, because the last 4 are clearly included in the sum of the previous ones. On the other hand, the "History of the 71st Division" written after the war says about 35 Soviet tanks knocked out by noon in the Nemirov area, but it's not a fact that they were all from the 8th TD (it's completely unclear how it was possible to knock out a KV or T-34 with an anti-tank rifle, machine gun or short-barreled "infantry gun"). In any case, nothing resembling an attacking tank regiment (150 tanks) is visible; moreover, if the regiment had acted (and not one battalion in scattered groups), then the German division after such an impact would have been "seen" with large gaps ... The entry for June 25 in the report on the

hostilities of the 8th TD begins like this: **"15 TP consisting of 54 tanks on the night of 06/26/41 went to the Mageruv area, reconnaissance established the presence of the enemy in Mageruv. Tanks 15 TP at a distance of 150 meters, the tank attacked from the tank and fought a night battle in the town of Mageruv.** There is no typo here - it was on the night of June 25-26 that the regiment, shrunken to the size of a battalion, approached Magerov. This is confirmed by an entry in the Combat Journal of the 17th Wehrmacht Army: **"June 26. In the evening and at night, the enemy attacked our positions with heavy and super-heavy tanks in the area of Rava-Russkaya and Magerov (which was already noted in the message of 25.6). The attacks were carried out partly in the dark under the light of s**

From where (rolling back east from Nemirov or moving north from Janow) the tank regiment approached Magerov, where it was in the afternoon of June 24 and all day until the late evening of June 25 - it is impossible to understand. The most important thing is why there are 54 tanks in the regiment, where are the rest? Judging by the report signed by the same people, only 19 units were lost the day before ... Be that as it may, the night battle in Magerovo went on with great bitterness and losses on both sides. In the report of the 8th TD we read: **"The battery of 75-mm cannons, the battery of mortars were destroyed, the documents of the headquarters of the 7th artillery regiment of the enemy were**

**destroyed and captured, while losing 19 tanks."** The entry in the ZhBD of the 17th Wehrmacht Army is imbued with deep concern: **"According to incoming reports from the troops, it seems difficult to counteract the enemy's super-heavy tanks with the available anti-tank weapons. Reports about the uselessness of all, without exception, anti-tank shells and an armor-piercing shell for a light field howitzer should be double-checked ... The command was instructed to give the units anti-aircraft artillery. 97 lpd and 24 pd were able to repel enemy attacks, but suffered significant losses. In the Magerov area, parts of our troops were surrounded. As a result, the air raid on Magerov was canceled until the next order ... "** On June 25, two other

regiments of the 8th Panzer Division also entered the battle: **"The 3rd Tank Battalion of the 16th Tank Division left at the disposal of the headquarters of the 6th Rifle Corps in the Yavoruv area, where fought with enemy artillery and infantry. 8 GAP during the day fought with enemy artillery in the area east of [68] Yazuv Stary. [173]** Period. Nothing more is said about the participation of the division in the battle near Yavoriv. Losses of tanks (if any) are not indicated. Why did the regiment turn into the "3rd tank battalion", where at the same time were the 1st, 2nd and 4th battalions? Not a single mention of them in the documents was found. It is also worth explaining here that heavy KV tanks

were located precisely in the first battalions of tank regiments. However, one battalion I, etc., made a strong impression on the

Germans: **"11.50. Large enemy armored forces from Yavoriv attack the left flank of the 68th Infantry Division and the right flank of the 1st Infantry Division. The enemy strikes again and again in groups of 10-25 tanks. To repel the attack, the 525th anti-tank battalion was completely allocated. The headquarters of the 49th corps assesses the situation as follows: there is at least one tank division in Yavorov, which is waging a desperate s**

**16.35. A preliminary report was received from the 1st Guards Division: The division fought off enemy counterattacks, supported by tanks, from Yavoriv and Yazów Stary between 0940 and 1030. Strong enemy artillery fire on the division is noted during the day** (it is very likely that these are the consequences of the actions of the artillery regiment of the 8th TD. - *M.S.* ) ". [170]

Fortunately for the enemy, all this did not last long. Record for 26 June, in the report on the hostilities, the 8th TD briefly states:

**"16 TP did not participate in the battles. GAP - did not participate in the battles.** So, briefly and simply, the crushing counterattack on the advancing German infantry at Yavorov ended. Another tank regiment of the division also left the Magerov area. This is described in an indistinct phrase: **"15 TP with battles in the Mageruv m. evacuated the remaining tanks in the Mageruv m."** [173]

That, in fact, is all. This is where the history of the fighting of the tankers of the 8th TD in the "Lviv ledge" ends. The next day, **"a consolidated tank regiment was created from the remnants of the 15th and 16th tank regiments,"** which, along the Lvov-Busk highway, left at the disposal of the commander of the 15th mechanized corps to participate in a counterattack on Berestechko. According to the reports of the commanders of the 15th MK, the "consolidated regiment from the remnants" arrived at them as part of 65 (sixty-five) tanks.

312 - 19-19 = 65? Even taking into account the losses of the 3rd Tank Battalion of the 16th Tank Regiment not indicated in the report in the battle near Yavorov, Yazuv Stary, the figures categorically do not converge.

I drew the attention of the public to this strange arithmetic back in 2004, in the book Barrel and Hoops. He proposed the corresponding term: "tank case". There was (and is) no limit to the indignation of the patriotic public, however, in the nine years since then, no decent explanation has been given for the disappearance of two hundred tanks.

Have not found.

### **32nd Tank Division** Initially,

the 4th MK included the 8th and 10th tank divisions, but then, after the formation of the "second wave" of mechanized corps (February - March 1941), the 10th tank division was transferred to the emerging 15th th mechanized corps, and the new 32nd tank division (formed on the basis of the 30th tank brigade) was included in the 4th MK. Similar "castling" took place in other mechanized corps of the Kiev OVO, as a result of which many corps had one "old", well-equipped tank division, and a "new" division, with a large serial number and a small (or even zero) number of tanks " new types. A typical example: the 12th and 34th tank divisions of the 8th mechanized corps or the 10th and 37th

divisions of the 15th mechanized corps (the combat operations of these formations will be

discussed later). Vlasov's mechanized corps was an exception to this rule - the newborn 32nd Panzer Division, in addition to 70 [69] T-26 and 31 BT-7 light tanks, managed to receive 49 KV tanks and 173 T-34 tanks (the last figure is an absolute record among all tank divisions of the Red Army). Is it worth rejoicing at such a record is a big question. Probably, it would have been wiser to distribute the scarce tanks of the "new types" differently, providing them primarily with the "old" personnel, knocked together and equipped divisions. However, what is done is done, and having at its disposal a division armed to capacity with the latest tanks, the command of the 6th Army and the 4th mechanized corps could take care to bring the number of auxiliary equipment in line with the presence of the main armament (tanks). Judging by the fact that **"the division**

**was provided with engineering equipment by 28%, there was a particular shortage of trenching tools (saws, shovels, axes)"**, history gave the command little time. Along with the missing axes, there were more serious problems. So, in the motorized rifle regiment of the division there were only 60 trucks and 16 motorcycles; it is clear that it is impossible to raise personnel with such a quantity of vehicles, and the regiment actually turned into ordinary infantry. The artillery regiment of the division had only 19 STZ-5 tractors. [181] Judging by the available documents, it never occurred to anyone to even redistribute the available means of mechanized traction between the divisions of the corps (I remind you that in the 81st MD there were 133 tractors, including 20 Voroshilovtsev, for which the motorized division simply had no objects to tow) [70]. In a word, there were problems with the technical

equipment of the 32nd TD, and there are enough of them to present them to an undemanding reader as "objective reasons" for the stunning defeat of the division. A little more careful study of the real facts reveals much more. As for the motorized rifle regiment without vehicles, it suffered the same fate as the completely mobile 8th Motorized Rifle Regiment of the 8th Panzer Division and the 202nd Motorized Rifle Regiment of the 81st Motorized Division - by decision of the command of the 6th Army, this regiment was withdrawn from the tank division and withdrawn to the reserve, to guard Lvov and the Army headquarters [71]. There he stood until the morning of June 28, when, in accordance with order No. 009 of the commander of the 6th Army, the regiment was transferred to the command of the commander of the 6th rifle corps, and the enemy himself approached the place of the upcoming battle. [182] With this option of using a motorized rifle regiment, the presence or

the lack of a complete set of vehicles is nothing fundamentally changed.

In the artillery regiment of a tank division, according to the state, there should be two divisions, 24 guns (12 howitzers of 122 mm caliber and 12 howitzers of 152 mm caliber). Of course, 19 tractors for 24 guns are not enough, but this is not yet a disaster. Especially if we take into account the actual presence of 27 ZIS-5 trucks in the artillery regiment of the 32nd Panzer Division. The weight of the 122-mm howitzer in the stowed position, i.e., together with the so-called. The "front end" (a wheeled cart on which the gun beds rest during movement) is 2900 kg, which corresponds to the weight of a large car with passengers. In a light artillery regiment of a rifle division, such a howitzer was towed by six horses - does a 3-ton truck really have less traction? Finally, any of the 173 T-34 tanks that were in the division could become the most powerful "tractor", three heads superior to the slow-moving STZ-5.

As the understanding reader probably already guessed, all this "theory" has nothing to do with practice, and the issue was resolved extremely simply: "the **artillery regiment was not equipped with tractors and left half of its materiel in winter quarters.**" So, one division was left to tow 12 guns of another division in the presence of 19 tractors. Is that enough now? Not at all. **"Due to the lack of means of transporting the guns, they had to be transferred to the muster area in two flights."** But even this phrase in the report on the combat operations of the division is not the strangest. Another thing is more surprising: **"By the start of hostilities, the level of combat training of the division's units is characterized by the following ... The 32nd howitzer artillery regiment did not have time to fire a single gun. The personnel were not prepared for firing in the field."** [181] What does "didn't have time" mean? The division began formation in March. In April, it is already quite warm in Western Ukraine, in May it can be hot - it's time to practice in the field. On May 16, 1940, People's Commissar for Defense Timoshenko issued the famous order No. 120 (May 16, 1940), in which he demanded **"to teach the troops**

**only what is needed in the war, and only in the way that is done in the war."** This phrase, turned into a slogan, flaunted in every "red corner", was repeated a hundred times at all party meetings of command personnel. And after that, three months was not enough for the artillery regiment of the tank division, stationed 70 km from the border, to at least once learn what to do in the war?

The report on the combat operations of the 32nd Panzer Division (signed on August 2, 1941 by the division commander, Colonel Pushkin) does not contain, fortunately, enchanting phrases that the division rushed along the front in order to mislead the enemy - however, they drove the 32nd TD on a much larger scale than the 8th Panzer (see incl., fig. 5). The first day of the war passed relatively calmly - the division left the place of permanent deployment (the suburbs of Lvov) and by 14 o'clock concentrated in the area of Las Zagumenny (4 km southwest of Zholkev). Late in the evening (at 23-00) an order was received to send two tank battalions of the division to the Radzekhuva area, for joint operations with the rifle battalion of the 81st MD against the enemy tank division advancing on Berestechko; in pursuance of this order, one battalion from each

tank regiment of the division.

The following entry in the report raises questions: ***"On June 23, the division received an order, in cooperation with the 8th Panzer and 81st Motorized Rifle Divisions, to surround and destroy the enemy in the Dunkovice area*** (a settlement near Yavorovskoye Highway, 5 km east of the border. - *M. S.* ) ***. Without going 30 km to the Lozina area*** (settlement 6 km northeast of Janow. - *M.S.* ) ***, she received a second task at 10 o'clock on the march - to destroy enemy tanks in the area of*** *Mosty-Velki ....* " [181] Who gave the first order? The command of the 6th Army set the task of attacking along the Yavorovsky highway to the border only on June 24, on the contrary, on June 23, the 4th mechanized corps was instructed to operate precisely in the northern direction, on Mosty-Velki, Parkhach. Perhaps there was some order from the commander of the mechanized corps, which has not yet been found. Then everything

happens quite clearly and, alas, traditionally: ***"The division column had to turn 180 degrees along one road. Upon arrival in the area of cape Mosty-Velki, the division of enemy tanks did not find it.***

***After the units of the division entered the concentration area, on the initiative of the division command*** (this is just not traditional. - *M.S.* ) ***, a tank group was allocated as part of the 1st tank battalion of the 64th tank regiment under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Golyas for joint operations with 3 th cavalry division in the Parchach area against units of the 9th infantry division of the enemy. At 17 o'clock the Golyas tank group concentrated in ur. Cherny Lyas was ready to attack, but a new order was received from the commander of the 6th Army to destroy an air assault and 300 enemy tanks in the Kamenka Strumilov area*** (on modern maps - Kamenka Bugskaya, or simply Kamenka. - *M.S.* ) ***. Parts of the division and the tank group Golyas began to carry out the new order, but***

*no enemy tanks were found there, but in Kamenka Strumilova there were their parts...*

***On June 24, by 1 o'clock, the division concentrated in the Dzibulka, Batyatyche area*** (settlement 6 km west of Kamenka. - *MS* ) , ***organizing reconnaissance in the direction of Kamenka Strumilov. At 11 o'clock, an order was received by 15 o'clock to concentrate in the Yazow Stary area*** (i.e., in 4 hours to cover about 85 km. - *M.S.* ) , ***mark 236 with a task in cooperation with the 8th tank and 81st motorized rifle divisions to destroy the enemy in the area of Olshina, Khotynets, Mlyn*** (n.p. near the Yavorovsky highway west of Krakovets. - *M.S.* ) ... ***The division, marching through the streets of the mountains. Lvov, met with an oncoming stream of combat and transport vehicles of the 8th mechanized corps. On the streets of the mountains Lvov were street fighting with saboteurs. With great difficulty, overcoming traffic jams, by 2.00 June 25, the division concentrated in the Yanovsky forest, Grabnik area ...*** "The head-on meeting of two steel streams on the narrow streets of a medieval city did not end with the destruction of

hundreds of tanks just because the "Faustpatron" had not yet been invented at that time. The reason for the incident was that the tank formations that ended up on the territory of the Lvov ledge were commanded by everyone at once: the 6th Army, the headquarters of the Southwestern Front, personally comrade. Zhukov; as a result, for the transfer to the Brody area, they used not the 32nd TD, which was already "a stone's throw" from the Busk, Brody highway, but the 8th mechanized corps, which at that time was rushing about in the southwestern sector of the "Lviv ledge".

The first (and last) battle of the 32nd Panzer Division took place on the evening of June 25, between Yazow Stary and Nagaczow (see Fig. 4). A few kilometers to the south at the same time (on the afternoon of June 25) the enemy was attacked by units of the 81st MD, in the first half of the day one tank battalion and an artillery regiment of the 8th tank division fought there. If you believe the report of the commander of the 32nd TD, he did not even know about it - in any case, no joint actions of three divisions of one mechanized corps are visible: ***"At 10 o'clock [June 25] , the division received an order from the commander of the 4th mechanized***

***corps, according to which the division was supposed to develop the strike of the 6th rifle corps in its offensive*** (from the 6th SC in that area there were half-broken units of one, the 97th rifle division. - *M.S.* ) , ***the headquarters of the 6th rifle corps put an independent tank division the task is to attack in the direction of a heavily fortified But anti-tank area*** (from where on Soviet territory the enemy,

on the march, could an anti-tank area be taken, and even a heavily fortified one? — ***M.S. ) with the presence of a river*** (a stream flowing into the Retychin river. - ***M.S. ) and swampy terrain, without supporting the actions of the division with either infantry or artillery. By 2 p.m., the division had concentrated on the initial positions of Shipka, Tyshyki, and Borousa. At 18:20, the division attacked units of the enemy's 5th Army Corps in the direction of Basiaki, Varenitsa, Semeruvka*** (settlement 7–8 km northwest of Yazow Stary. - ***M.S. ) . As a result of the battle, the following were destroyed: tanks*** (of which there was not a single one. - ***M.S. ) - 16, 75-mm guns - 4, anti-tank guns - 8, trailers with ammunition - 14. Our losses - 15 tanks. [181]***

Judging by the railroad tracks of the 49th mountain infantry corps of the Wehrmacht, the main events of the battle with tanks in the Yavorov-Nagaczow zone took place in the first half of the day, respectively, they have nothing to do with the fighting of the 32nd Panzer Division. The appearance of KV tanks from the 32nd TD on the battlefield is possibly described in the following lines:

***“The 1st Guards Division reports that the division encountered the heaviest enemy tanks, still of an unknown type (not in our manuals), against which the division’s anti-tank weapons, including 37-mm PgGr40 armor-piercing shells (sub-caliber shells with a tungsten carbide core. - M. C. ) are ineffective. In some cases, tank destroyers rushed at the tanks with hand grenades, bundles of grenades and pistols and disabled them ... ”[ 170]*** In the final German reports for the day of June 25, highlight the share of the 32nd

etc. in losses and successes is almost impossible:

***“22.15. The enemy tank corps carried out attacks throughout the day from the Yavorov region with large forces supported by tanks and artillery against 68 infantry divisions and 1 infantry division. The attacks were repulsed with heavy losses on both sides. June 26,***

***1941 22.15. The corps headquarters transmitted the following daily report to the army: As a result of successful defensive operations against the tank forces near Yavorov, the enemy in the corps zone is retreating to the southeast ...***

***23.00. The clearing of the battlefields showed that on the front in front of the corps during defensive battles with tanks on June 24 and 25, at least 100 tanks were knocked out and more than 50 guns were captured ... ”[170 ]***

And this time the Germans did not greatly inflate the number of destroyed Soviet tanks. The loss of 15 tanks was recognized in the report of the commander of the 32nd TD, two tank companies of the 81st MD were most likely completely destroyed,



suffered some losses and the tank battalion of the 8th TD, which fought on the morning of June 25th. It may well be 70-80 units. Success came at the cost of large (by the standards and ideas of the Wehrmacht) losses. On June 26, it was decided to withdraw the 68th Infantry Division, as having suffered the greatest losses, to the reserve, replacing it on the front of the offensive of the corps with the 4th Mountain Infantry Division (it was an incomplete formation, with two infantry regiments instead of the three prescribed by the state). In concrete terms,

heavy losses in the battles of June 24–26 were as follows: **[183]** 1st Guards

Division - 101 killed, 235 wounded, 336 people in total; 68th

Infantry Division - 114 killed, 433 wounded, total 547

people; 257th Infantry Division - 23 killed, 67

wounded, total 90 people. Concluding the conversation about the battle near

Yavorov, we will quote another remarkable fragment of the entry in the ZhBD of the 49th CPC dated 2 June:

***“11.00. The headquarters of the 17th Army, taking into account the calm situation in the air (however, with the intensification of actions [of enemy aircraft], the pre-existing situation must be restored), allocated one anti-aircraft battery to fight against heavy tanks, now located in the Krakovets area to carry out air defense tasks ”***. As you can see, 4 German anti-aircraft guns (if we are talking about a battery of heavy 88-mm guns) appeared, but already “after a fight”. The standard German 37-mm anti-tank gun was practically useless in combat with new Soviet tanks, which is once again confirmed in the report of the commander of the 32nd Panzer Division: ***“The armor of our tanks cannot be penetrated by German 37-mm guns; there were cases when the KV tank had up to 100 hits, but the armor was not pierced . [181]***

At that moment, when the enemy's anti-tank defense was cracking at the seams and the German soldiers ***“rushed at the tanks with hand grenades, bundles of grenades and pistols”***, the armored colossus of the 32nd TD turned around and along the country road Yavorov, Sudova Cherry went south:

***“On June 26, at 4 o'clock, the division received an order from the commander of the 4th mechanized corps to go to the Grudek Jagiellonski, Sudova Vishnya area with the task of defeating a column of 300 enemy tanks moving from Moscisk to Lvov. By 18 hours (from Yazuv-Stary to Sudov Vishnya 30 km along the road. - M.S. ) the division concentrated in ur. Zamlyne. Reconnaissance of the battalion of tanks of the 64th tank regiment at the turn of the river near Sudov Vishnya established the advanced units of the 14th infantry regiment of the enemy, but there were no enemy tanks in this area .... ”***

There could not have been any German tanks there due to the absence of such on the entire front of the 17th Wehrmacht Army. But someone saw them, and in Opersvodka No. 09 of the headquarters of the South-Western Front dated 20-00 on June 26 there are still **"mechanized units of the enemy approaching Sudova Vishnya from the west."** [183] Immediately after the senseless march to Sudova Vyshnya, the 32nd Panzer Division at 17:00 on 26 June was ordered to concentrate in the Obroshyn area (a southwestern suburb of Lvov) and "be ready for action on Lyuben **Wielki** (n.p. on the highway Sambir, Lviv). **The division made a night 40-kilometer march. Thus, the division, withdrawn from the Yavoriv sector, where it could have provided decisive assistance to the 6th Rifle Corps, was transferred to the bridge direction, where there were no tanks, and at the end of the next day was withdrawn [to] 10 km east of Grudek Jagielonsk and the active mission Did not have. According to the headquarters of the corps, an enemy grouping was established in the Luben Velki area, in fact, this grouping did not exist.**

On this, the actions of the 32nd Panzer Division as a shock mechanized formation ended. On June 28 and 29, **"the division conducted a mobile defense along the Yanovsky and Grudek-Yagelionsky highway"**, repeatedly turning into counterattacks and holding back the advance of the enemy infantry towards Lvov. On the evening of June 29, an order was received to withdraw from Lvov. **"During the passage through Lvov, parts of the division fought street battles, suppressing firing points in the houses and attics of the city. During the withdrawal from Lvov, warehouses with ammunition, fuel, food and the remaining materiel were destroyed."** [181] Further, a non-stop retreat to

the east began,

with the end point beyond the Dnieper. **Last Efforts** On the evening of June 26, order No. 005 was signed at the headquarters of the 6th Army. At the beginning of it there was a strange phrase: **"The army, continuing to cover the concentration of troops, defends the line during 27.6.41 ..."** It would seem that you can talk about the cover operation it was no longer possible to remember in a situation where there was practically nothing to concentrate on. The front line (a very conditional line in a situation of continuous withdrawal) passed through Kamenka Bugskaya, the southern bank of the river. Rata (the 3rd Cavalry Division continued to hold this sector), Dobrosin, Starichi (settlement 15 km northeast of Yavorov), Grudek Jagiellonski, Luben-Velki. [184] The 41st Rifle Division and the garrisons of the Rava-Russky UR continued to fight in conditions of almost complete encirclement. Far to the west, practically deep behind enemy lines, the 99th Rifle Division of the 26th Army continued to hold the border Przemyśl and even periodically counterattacked in the direction of the river.

Order No. 005 authorized the withdrawal of the 41st Rifle Division from the Rava-Russian UR zone. On the night of June 27, the division, after five days of fighting with a vastly superior enemy, retreated in an organized manner to Dobrosin and further to Zholkev. The garrisons of some bunkers in the fortified area continued to fire until June 29-30 - and this is not a heroic legend, but a fact confirmed by enemy documents. Five divisions of the 26th and 12th Armies, having stood idle for six days in the Carpathians,

began to withdraw under pressure from negligible enemy forces (two "security divisions", i.e., two infantry regiments with small artillery). Even the command of the SWF itself, reporting to the General Staff at 22.00 on June 28, was forced to admit that ***"the withdrawal of units of the 26th and 12th armies on the night of 28.6.41 to the new line of Luben-Velki, Drohobych, Borislav, Tukhlya and further along the state border was committed without proper influence from the enemy. [274]*** The last line of defense to the west of Lvov could be the chain of lakes of the Vereshchytsia River, which crosses two main roads along the line of Janow, Grudek Jagiellonsky,

Luben-Wielki. The command of the 6th Army sent two motorized rifle regiments there (withdrawn earlier from the 81st MD and 8th TD), two artillery regiments of the RGK (414th and 445th); the remnants of the 97th Rifle Division and the 81st Rifle Division were withdrawn to the same line. The 32nd Panzer Division, assigned to the western suburbs of Lvov, was also supposed to reinforce the defense. The forces were considerable, especially taking into account the very favorable terrain conditions for the defenders - however, the element of retreat had already completely taken possession of the troops. The condition of the troops in the report of the Military Council of the 6th Army dated June 29 was characterized as follows: ***"The 41st Rifle Division suffered significant losses and needs to be replenished; The 159th Rifle Division lost its command, was disorganized by aviation and was completely unfit for combat, requiring staffing; The 97th Rifle***

***Division suffered significant losses, lost its leading command staff and requires withdrawal to the rear for replenishment ... The 81st Motorized Rifle Division is raw, poorly organized, undertrained (the division was formed on the basis of the 81st Rifle Division, leading its history . - M.S. ) . Lost a significant number of personnel and materiel. The 3rd Cavalry Division is combat-ready, has a solid morale. [185]***

The last days of the fighting near the western suburbs of Lvov are described in the Combat Action Journal of the 17th Wehrmacht Army as follows: ***"June 27, 1941.***

**... The primary task of the army is now the energetic pursuit of the main enemy forces and the establishment of combat contact with him in order to draw him into battle. 12.50. In the**

**offensive zone of 49 GPC and 4 AK, the enemy avoids combat and retreats. The advanced units are rapidly moving forward. At about 4 p.m., the reconnaissance units of the 49th Guards Command almost reached the area of the lake defile near Grudek Jagiellonsky ...**

**June 28, 1941 In the early morning, the pursuit of the retreating units was resumed adversary...**

**4-15. The forward units of the 4th Guards Division occupied the railway bridge near Kamennobrod (settlement 5 km north of Grudek Jagiellonsky. - M.S. ) . The bridge is not damaged. 1 GPD reached the edge of the**

**forest to the west of Janow ... 11-15. 49 GPC (4 GPD and 1 GPD) managed to break through the la between the large reservoir at Grudek Jagiellonian and Janów...**

**14-45. In the offensive zone of 4 GPD and 1 GPD, as well as 257 PD, the enemy counterattacks with the support of tanks. Counterattacks were repelled, while 23 enemy tanks were destroyed** (in the report of the commander of the 32nd TD, these events are described as follows: **"As a result of the battle at the turn of Las Meisky, Fl. Petershof, 3 tanks, 4 cars, 150 motorcycles, 1 battery, 8 mortars and up to 400 enemy infantry were suppressed. Our losses are 8 tanks "** ). **June 29, 1941 From early morning**

**until noon, the advance of our troops along across the front, in places on a very large scale.**

**06.30. Parts of the 257th Infantry Division break through a chain of lakes near Cherlyany, Grudek Jagiellonian. The enemy defended himself with small forces, but stubbornly enough. A reconnaissance party was sent in the direction of Luben Velki. Bridges in the area of Cherlyany and Grudek Jagiellonian were blown up by the enemy.**

**4 GPD came out of the area on both sides of the river. Mshan towards Rudno** (western suburb of Lviv. - M.S. ) . **In the first half of the day, at the turn of Rudno, the enemy counterattacked using tank units, including super-heavy tanks** (in the report on the hostilities of the 32nd TD we read: **"At 7 o'clock, the 63rd tank regiment counterattacked the enemy in the area of Konopnitsa, Feeruvka and, in cooperation with the 8th motorized rifle regiment, destroyed 8 guns, 11 anti-tank guns, 5 transport vehicles and 100 motorcycles "** ). **Counterattacks were supported by enemy bomber aircraft from Lvov. Enemy counterattacks were repulsed ...**

**June 30, 1941**

**04.20. Lvov was taken without a fight by units of the 1st**

**Guards Rifle Division..." [167]** The day of June 30, 1941 will remain in the

history of the city for a long time, it would seem that it has already seen a lot of terrible things in its lifetime. A suffocating cadaverous stench hung over Lvov, in the area of city prisons, and it was completely impossible to be without a respirator. The executions of prisoners began on the evening of June 24, and the weather in those days was very hot.

| №  | Имя                   | Дата | Статус     |
|----|-----------------------|------|------------|
| 1  | ПЕТРОВ Иван Иванович  | 1878 | 54-2-11    |
| 2  | СМЕРДИН Иван Иванович | 1885 | 54-2-11    |
| 3  | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1892 | 54-2-11    |
| 4  | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1915 | 54-2-11    |
| 5  | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1885 | 54-2-10-11 |
| 6  | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1916 | 54-2-11    |
| 7  | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1916 | 54-2-11    |
| 8  | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1922 | 54-6       |
| 9  | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1906 | 54-6       |
| 10 | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1924 | 54-2-11    |
| 11 | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1907 | 54-2-11    |
| 12 | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1904 | 54-2-11    |
| 13 | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1900 | 54-2-11    |
| 14 | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1904 | 54-2-11    |
| 15 | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1913 | 54-2-11    |
| 16 | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1921 | 54-2-10    |
| 17 | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1908 | 54-2-11    |
| 18 | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1919 | 54-2-11    |
| 19 | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1900 | 54-2-11    |
| 20 | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1904 | 54-2-11    |
| 21 | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1911 | 54-2-11    |
| 22 | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1901 | 54-11      |
| 23 | СЕРГЕЕВ Иван Иванович | 1900 | 54-2-10-11 |

Rice. 16. List of prisoners of the Lviv prison with an order to be shot

Judging by the report dated July 12, 1941, the head of the prison department of the NKVD of Ukraine, Captain of State Security A.F. Filippov, 2464 prisoners were "evacuated according to the 1st category" from Lviv prisons [72]. (Fig. 16). In the report of the headquarters of the 49th mountain rifle corps to the headquarters of the 17th Army dated 12.00 07.01.41, this "evacuation in the 1st category" was described So:

***“After the entry of German troops into Lvov on June 30, 1941, several hundred corpses of men and women were found in three prisons of the city, who had been killed during the last days. So, in the basements of the military prison in Lvov, about 120 corpses of men and women, stacked on top of each other, were found in only one cell ... As the inspection of the discovered corpses showed, the murder was preceded by severe torture and torture. On all parts of the body of the corpses there are***

***severe injuries from blows and injections ... ”*** The office of Dr. Goebbels“ worked out the situation ”in full: they brought film and photo correspondents, and later released a whole book of letters from German soldiers in which they talk about what they saw (it is impossible to quote). For five decades, Soviet propaganda vehemently denied the fact of the massacre of prisoners, but since too many people saw mountains of mutilated corpses, the “correct” interpretation of events was invented, enshrined in the fundamental 6-volume “History of the Great Patriotic War” interpretation of events:

***“To conduct terror, the fascist command used a special battalion code-named “Nachtigal” ... The Nachtigall battalion was created by the 2nd intelligence department of the Wehrmacht in the winter of 1940/41 and was staffed with anti-Soviet elements specially trained for sabotage and terrorist activities [73] . Terrorist gangs from the Nachtigal battalion broke into the houses of civilians, dragged them out of their apartments, took them to the prison yard (emphasis mine. - M.S. ) and brutally destroyed them there. Three thousand lawyers, doctors, engineers and other members of the intelligentsia fell victim to terror on the night of July 2...” [ 275] powers***

and formed a "government" of themselves. Despite all assurances of loyalty, despite posters and leaflets with the slogan “Heil Hitler! Glory to Hitler”, posted by Bandera all over the city, the Germans were extremely indignant at the fact of the unauthorized creation of a “government” in the territory occupied at the cost of the blood of German soldiers, not coordinated with Berlin. On July 9, the "head of the government" Stetsko was arrested and taken to Berlin, where Bandera himself was taken from Krakow under escort. On July 15, they were released safe and sound, but the “black cat” ran between the failed allies, and the “spark”, lit on June 30, 1941 in Lvov, flared up into the flames of a civil war that blazed in Galicia right up to the end of the 40s ...

## Chapter 2.3 Dubno

In the plans of the command of the Wehrmacht, the Lviv direction was just a zone of auxiliary strike. The main events were to unfold on the front of the 6th Army, which was to break through the border fortifications near the Bug River and bring two corps of the 1st Tank Group into the gap. In the "Instructions for advancing" approved on May 2, 1941 by the command of the 6th Army, the task of one of these corps was formulated as follows: ***"The***

### ***48th Tank Corps***

***captures crossings across the river. The Bug on both sides of the Sokal, breaks through the enemy's border positions and opens the way for its motorized formations through Tartakov, Stojanow, Radzekhuv to advance through Leshnev to Dubno ("central tank road"). It is important as quickly as possible (suddenly) to capture the crossings across the river. Stay at Shurovice and***

***Berestechko. Keep the 11th Panzer Division as close as possible to Sokal, so that after the infantry divisions have taken the eastern bank of the Bug, it can, if necessary, be quickly brought in to break through enemy positions in depth. After the breakthrough, the motorized forces of the corps can also be sent to Radzechow through Krystynopil. [187]***

### **Breakthrough to**

**Berestechko** The task, especially at the first stage of its solution, was not easy: it was necessary to force the Bug River, break through the fortifications of Strumilovsky UR, force the Styr River; only after that was it possible to get onto the paved belt of the Brody-Dubno highway. (Fig. 17.)



Rice. 17. The offensive zone of the 48th tank corps of the

Wehrmacht The terrain in the zone from the Bug to Styr is a wet meadow, a forest, swampy in places, many small streams; paved roads are few or non-existent. The main "highway" from Sokal to Radzechow, Berestechko is described in the railway logistic service of the logistics service of the 1st Wehrmacht TGr (record dated June 24) as follows: "Although the head of the logistics department rides a motorcycle **with a sidecar and does not wait anywhere, he has 30 km to travel takes 4 hours. The difference between a highway and a country road is only that the highway is wider...**" [230]

For the Germans, the condition for success in such a situation was the high rate of advance - they had to capture the crossings on the river. Styr (60 km east of the border) before the enemy (the Red Army), taken by surprise, has time to bring up reserves and organize a stable defense. And when looking at the situation from the other side of the front, the time factor became the main one: whether the troops located near the border, together with the garrisons of the fortified area, would be able to delay the enemy for the time necessary to advance to the line of the river. Styr mobile anti-tank formations. Due to the incomplete deployment of the

troops of the Southwestern Front on June 22, near the border, in the Sokal strip, Krystynopol, there was one single 124th rifle division (27th SC, 5th Army) and the 21st corps artillery regiment. It was impossible to prevent the breakthrough of the front with such forces - on the other side of the Bug, the command of the Wehrmacht



concentrated four (111, 75, 57, 297th) infantry divisions. It was theoretically possible to delay the enemy and reduce the rate of his advance, taking into account the presence of a river barrier and reinforced concrete bunkers in the fortified area. The Strumilovsky UR was no fundamentally different from the Rava-Russky, the same bunkers in design and armament, about the same number (about 180 were built, 100 less were built and armed) - but there was no general Mikushev there. The result is clearly visible in the entries of the Combat Action Journal of the 48th Wehrmacht Tank Corps: **"03.15. The enemy is completely taken by surprise and at first offers little to no resistance. The most important bridge**

**in the Sokal region is in our hands intact. Forcing the Bug passes without incident...**

**05.00. There is still no organized resistance of the enemy ...**

**09.45. The offensive of the infantry divisions is developing successfully. Parts of the 57th infantry division are fighting for height 234 north of Perespa ... The 75th infantry division is advancing in the direction of Tartakov (settlement 12 and 8 km east of the border. - M.S. ). In this area, the enemy retreats to the east. Military bridges in the 57th and**

**75th lanes have already been built. 11.55. The corps commander assesses the state of the enemy as a state of complete confusion, notes the absence of organized resistance, as well as the absence of fresh reserves from the enemy ... The bridge at Krystynopol was also captured intact ...**

**13.30. To date, the resistance of bunkers in the area of the Rawszczyn colony is still ongoing; these firing points keep under fire some sections of the road intended for the movement of tanks. The bunkers are built according to the latest engineering science...**

**15.00. Infantry divisions reached the first line of advance (road Tarktakov - Perespa) ...**

**20.00. The reconnaissance units of the 57th Infantry Division manage to advance in the direction of Torquay (settlement 20 km east of Sokal. - M.S. ).**

**General assessment of the situation: The first day of fighting was a complete success. Strong enemy fortifications along the river. The Bug was broken through as a result of a bold attack by our troops, who managed to wedge into the enemy's location to a depth of 20 km ... " [188]**

In the situation that had arisen, there was still an opportunity to withdraw the units of the 124th Rifle Division that had retained their combat capability to the east and move on to

mobile defense - the benefit of a wooded and swampy area with many river barriers favored the defending side. However, on the morning of June 23, the commander of the 5th Army in Combat Order No. 3 demanded that the 27th Rifle Corps **"go on a decisive offensive on the entire front."** [189] Vladimirovsky (at the beginning of the war - deputy chief of the operational department of the headquarters of the 5th Army), in his study, however, claims that **"Major General Potapov had no illusions about the outcome of the upcoming actions,"** and gave the order to attack in execution of the instructions of the front command. [43] Be that as it may, an attempt to advance with disorganized forces against a superior enemy ended in the fact that by the end of the day the 124th division was thrown back to the Pechikhvosty, Druzhkopol line (settlement 20 km east of the Tartakov line, Perespa) , and then surrounded and defeated in the Milyatin area [74]. In the documents of the enemy, the combat operations of the infantry units for June 23 are reflected as follows:

***"The position of the infantry***

***divisions: 57 infantry divisions overcame slight enemy resistance, reached the line of Perespa, Spasov (settlement 5 km east of Perespa. - M.S. ) and continues the offensive ... 75 infantry division also advances at a good pace, while encountering insignificant enemy resistance.***

***17.00 57 pd, despite the poor condition of the road network, continued the relentless pursuit of the enemy, who offered only weak resistance, and reached the line of Stojanow, Volitsa Druzhkopolska. At 15.30, a column of enemy units was***

***discovered (they also include tank units), moving from Poritsk (settlement 20 km northeast of Sokal. - M.S. ) in a westerly direction ... According to captured enemy soldiers, the task of this column is to capture bridges in the Sokal region. Against these enemy units, which threaten our flanks and supply lines, the corps can oppose only limited forces ... " [188]***

While on the left (northern) flank of 48 TK the German infantry "overcame the resistance of the enemy," the motorized forward detachments moved non-stop to the east, and the motorcyclists significantly overtook the tank units that were stuck in the swampy area northeast of Radzechow. The motorcycle battalion of the 11th Panzer Division was the first (at 17.00, judging by the entry in the corps' railway records) to achieve success, ***"in the course of a bold attack, capturing the bridges across the river intact. Styr in the Merv region*** (settlement 5 km southwest

Berestechko. — **M.S. ) and Berestechko.** Around 6:30 pm, the motorized infantry regiment of the 11th TD reached the river. Styr near Shurovice, where he was forced to stop in front of the blown up bridge. At 9 pm on June 23, the reconnaissance battalion of the 57th Infantry Division crossed Styr in the Plyashevo area (6 km downstream from Berestechko, 65 km east of the border).

The final entry in the ZhBD 48 TC for June

23: ***“On this day, the divisions of the corps showed outstanding achievements. Today, the troops really learned what Russian off-road means. Divisions moving on foot are forced to walk in clouds of dust in intense heat on dirt roads next to the highway along which tanks are moving. Yes, and the highway is mostly unpaved and generally in a deplorable state ... ”***

The command of the 48th TC believed that its successes could have been even greater if the higher leadership (the headquarters of the 1st TGr and the 6th Army) had not interfered. The entries in the corps' railway records for June 22 and 23 are overflowing with descriptions of disputes with superiors over the introduction of tank divisions into battle. While the command of the corps already at 06:30 on June 22 proposed to immediately bring the 11th Panzer Division into battle, the high command showed caution (as subsequent events showed - excessive) and forbade the use of tank formations before the infantry gained a foothold on the eastern bank of the Bug . Ultimately, the 11th TD began to advance across the bridges at Sokal only at 15:00 on June 22, and late in the evening its advanced units reached Stojanow, Radzechow; the division completely crossed the Bug only by 5 am on June 24th. As for the second tank division of the corps (16 TD), it received an order to start crossing the Bug at 14:00 on 24 June.

Perhaps the main obstacle associated with the actions of the enemy was for the Germans several defense units of the Strumilovsky UR in the area of Krystynopol and Sokal. Once in complete encirclement, the garrisons of these pillboxes fought for 4 days. Entry in ZhBD 48 TC dated June 25: ***“There are about 20 bunkers with resistance, the enemy defends exceptionally stubbornly and fights to the last bullet. The 51st sapper-assault battalion*** (a special unit for the destruction of bunkers. - ***M.S. ) is still engaged in the suppression of individual firing points.*** Of course, a fence in which 9 out of 10 boards are missing cannot become a full-fledged obstacle, however, heroic resistance at isolated points of the front greatly hindered the enemy's advance: ***“June 24. 09.30. The 16th TD cannot yet move along the Krystynopol-Radzechow highway, since enemy pillboxes in this area are not suppressed ... Bypass the pillboxes using the forest roads north of the highway,***

***absolutely impossible due to their unsuitability for the promotion of motorized transport. [188]***

Both the general principles of the operational art of that time, and the very specific plan for covering the Kyiv OVO assumed that the breakthrough of large enemy motorized formations would be reflected by the introduction of mobile reserves into battle: PTABRs and mechanized corps. ***“The task of anti-tank artillery brigades is to meet enemy tanks with powerful artillery fire at prepared lines and, together with aviation, delay their advance until our mechanized corps approach and counterattack. The task of the mechanized corps is to deploy under the cover of anti-tank artillery brigades, powerful flank and concentric strikes, together with aviation, inflict a final defeat on the enemy’s mechanized units and eliminate the breakthrough. [190 ]***

Yes, in comparison with those “large motorized formations of the enemy” that were drawn on the maps of pre-war command and staff games (several thousand tanks in one operational direction), the real 11th Wehrmacht TD looks very pale. It consisted of only 143 tanks, of which only 67 were medium tanks with partial anti-cannon armor (20 Pz-IVs and 47 upgraded Pz-IIIs with a 50-mm cannon). Without even mentioning the more fantastic pre-war standards for the use of anti-tank missiles, it is appropriate to assume that one anti-tank brigade (120 guns of 76 mm caliber and above) should have, if not completely destroyed, then confidently “half” the 11th Panzer Division. Nothing of the kind, however, happened. Not a single anti-tank brigade prevented

the advance of the 11th TD (and then only 48 TK in general) on Berestechko, Dubno. And the most surprising thing is that it did not surprise anyone. Neither the command of the Southwestern Front (in the known documents of June 1941 there is not even the slightest mention of this issue), nor the army of many thousands of Soviet military historians. For whom and for what, in this case, were pre-war plans drawn up?

In the Kiev OVO, in accordance with the April directives of the People's Commissariat of Defense, five PTABRs were created. **[191]** Two of them (3rd and 4th) were formed in the area, respectively, Gaisin and Vinnitsa, i.e., at the southern base of the “Lvov ledge”; it was hardly possible to involve them in combat operations at Berestechko, Dubno - not so much because of the distance and difficulties of the march, but because of the concern of the front command about the threat from the mythical grouping of enemy tank forces in Romania. On the right (northern) flank of the SWF, theoretically there could be